



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

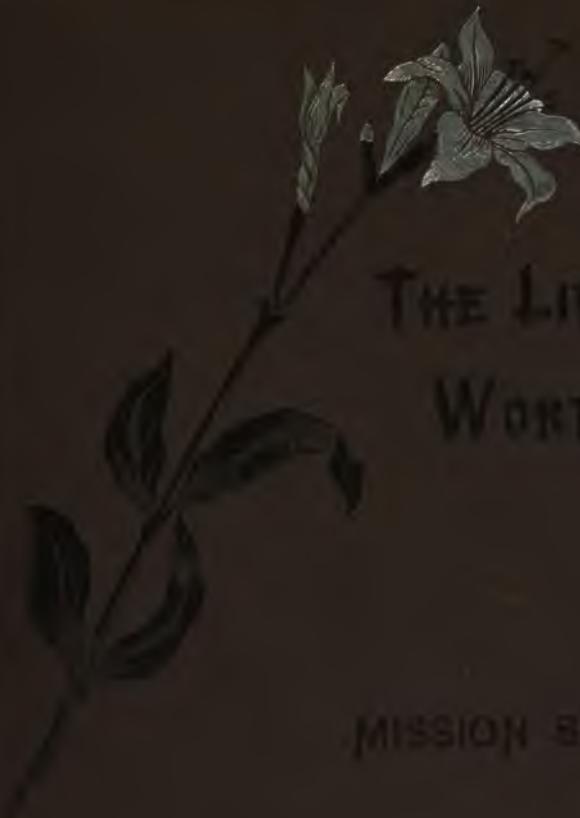
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



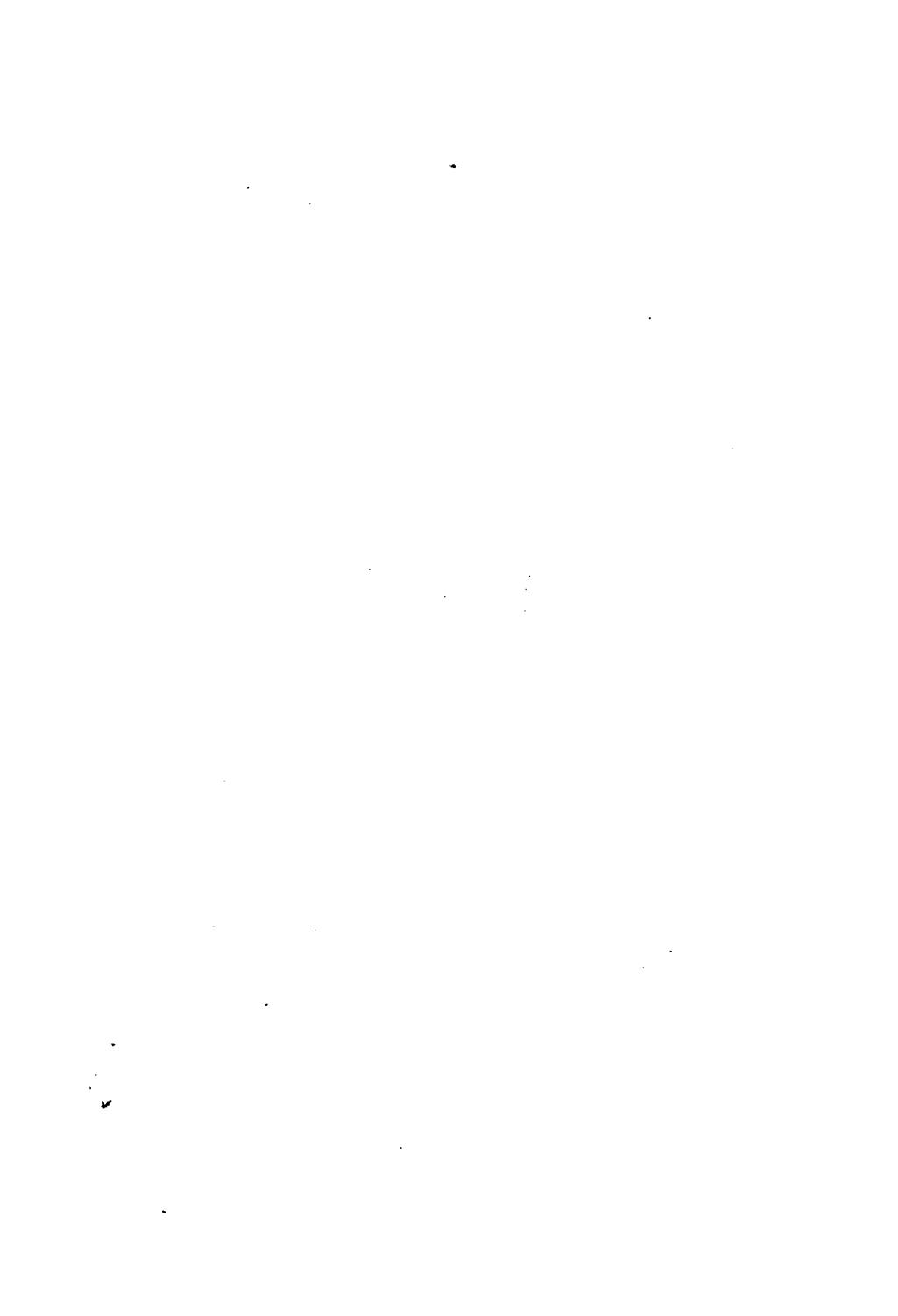
THE LIFE WORTH LIVING

MISSION SERMONS

W. S. MUNROE, BOSTON



THE LIFE WORTH LIVING.



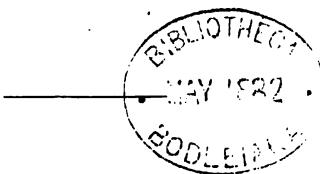
The
Life worth Living :

MISSION SERMONS.

BY THE

REV. H. J. WILMOT BUXTON, M.A.,

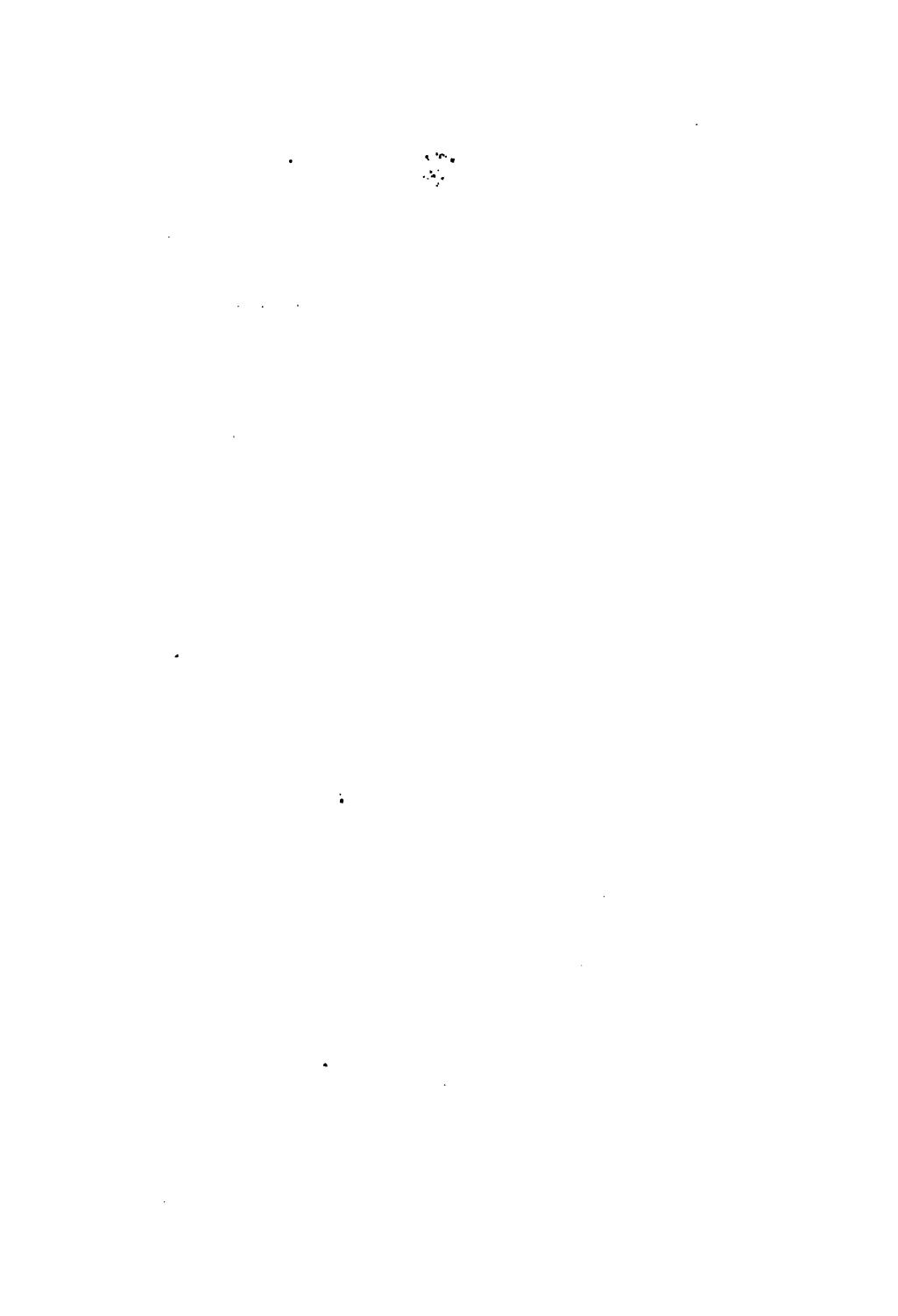
VICAR OF S. GILES-IN-THE-WOOD, NORTH DEVON. AUTHOR OF "MISSION SERMONS
FOR A YEAR," "THE LORD'S SONG," ETC.



London:

W. SKEFFINGTON & SON, 163, PICCADILLY.

—
1882,



Contents.

SERMON I.

THE FOUR LAST THINGS.

(ADVENT.)

D E A T H .

HEBREWS IX. 27.

PAGE

"It is appointed unto men once to die."

i

SERMON II.

THE FOUR LAST THINGS.

(ADVENT.)

J U D G M E N T .

HEBREWS XI. 27.

"After this the Judgment."

9

SERMON III.

THE FOUR LAST THINGS.

(ADVENT.)

H E L L .

PSALM IX. 17.—(Prayer Book Version.)

"The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the people
that forget God."

17

SERMON IV.

	PAGE
<i>THE FOUR LAST THINGS.</i>	21

(ADVENT.)

H E A V E N .

PSALM CVII. 30.

"He bringeth them unto their desired haven." 22

SERMON V.*SWEEEPING THE HOUSE.*

(BEFORE LENT.)

2 KINGS IV. 26.

"Is it well with thee?" 29

SERMON VI.*THE CONQUERING LIFE.*

(LENT.)

EXODUS XXIII. 30.

"By little and little I will drive them out from before thee." 34

SERMON VII.*THE COURAGEOUS LIFE.*

(LENT.)

JOSHUA I. 7.

"Only be strong, and very courageous." 41

SERMON VIII.

PAGE

THE CONSISTENT LIFE.

(LENT.)

S. JOHN VI. 28.

“What shall we do that we might work the works of God?” 48

SERMON IX.*THE REJOICING LIFE.*

ACTS VIII. 39.

“He went on his way rejoicing.” 56

SERMON X.*THE PATIENT LIFE.*

2 Cor. VI. 10.

“As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.” 65

SERMON XI.*THE TEMPTED LIFE.*

S. JAMES I. 12.

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.” 73

SERMON XII.

PAGE

THE PERSEVERING LIFE.

S. MATT. X. 22.

"He that endureth to the end shall be saved."

83

SERMON XIII.

THE PRAISING LIFE.

I COR. X. 31.

"Do all to the glory of God."

91

SERMON XIV.

THE PRAYING LIFE.

EPHES. VI. 18.

"Praying always."

100

SERMON XV.

HALF A GOSPEL.

ACTS XVI. 31.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

110

SERMON XVI.

PAGE

WHAT CONFIRMATION MEANS.

ACTS VIII. 17.

"Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the
Holy Ghost."

118

SERMON XVII.*BIBLE READING. I.*

ACTS VIII. 30.

"Understandest thou what thou readest?"

127

SERMON XVIII.*BIBLE READING. II.*

ACTS VIII. 30.

"Understandest thou what thou readest?"

137

SERMON XIX.*A BASKET OF SUMMER FRUIT.*

(HARVEST FESTIVAL.)

AMOS VIII. 1.

"Behold a basket of summer fruit."

143

SERMON XX.*JESUS AT THE DOOR.*

PAGE

REVELATION III. 20.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock." 152

SERMON XXI.*THE MESSAGE OF THE BELLS.*

ROMANS X. 18.

"Their sound went into all the earth." 160

SERMON XXII.*A SONG OF REDEMPTION.*

PSALM CVII. 2.

"Let them give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed, and delivered from the hand of the enemy." 169

SERMON XXIII.*A COMMON SIN.*

S. LUKE XIV. 18.

"And they all with one consent began to make excuse." 181

SERMON XXIV.*WHAT SOCIETY WANTS.*

PROVERBS XII. 19.

"The lip of truth shall be established for ever." 191

SERMON I.

THE FOUR LAST THINGS.

(*Advent.*)

DEATH.

HEBREWS IX. 27.

"It is appointed unto men once to die."

I was passing lately by the old house which had been home to me for many years. The house was empty and shut up. The blinds were drawn down in the windows, which seemed to look at me with cold dead eyes. There was the one window out of which I had often gazed as child and man, and had dreamed of many things in the future. It was blank and sightless now. There was the room where as a youth I had laboured hard to win a way in the world; and other rooms where had been heard the merry laugh of joy, and the bitter sob of sorrow; where

A

bright hopes had been cherished, and bitter disappointments endured: and all these rooms were alike silent, uncared for, deserted now. The household gods were removed from the hearth, and the hearth itself was cold and cheerless. Now how came all this to pass? It was because Death had come to the place, and had changed all. As I looked at the silent house, where Death had come and banished the once happy faces, and closed the windows to the world, I thought how that shut-up house was a type of the life and death of us all. We all have our houses in life, which we build and decorate, and love to dwell in. One has his house of Ambition, and he builds it up proudly towards the sky like Babel of old. He will make him a name, the world shall hear of him: he will be rich and powerful, he will pull down his barns and build greater, and suddenly Death comes to his house, and draws down the blinds, and the house of Ambition is empty. Another of us has his house of Pleasure, in its chambers are all manner of delights, the cup of sweetness is full mixed, and the voice is heard of singing men and singing women, and one day Death comes, and the windows are darkened, and the voice of weeping is heard, and the house of Pleasure is empty, and the mourners go about the streets. One has his House of money, and for that he labours, and rises early and so late takes rest. For that he wears out his body, and perchance imperils his soul, he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them. And one day the glory of

the house which he made so strong for himself is gone, Death darkens the windows, and the door is shut. “I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.”

The only certainty in life is death, since—

“ Nothing can we call our own but death,
And that small model of the barren earth
Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.”

Yet this same death, the certainty of which we all allow, is that which few of us like to think of. “ It is appointed unto men once to die.” God in His mercy is ever preaching to us from this text in the daily events of our lives, that we may set our house in order while yet the windows are open to the sunshine, before the day comes when this earthly house shall be dissolved, and we begin a new housekeeping in the house not made with hands. God fills this world with change and decay that we may remember the last great change of all ; He suffers this life to be full of partings and separations and sorrows, that our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found, and where there is no complaining in the streets. I lately had a letter returned to me through the post : over the direction which I had written, I read the words, “ Not known—left the place.” So will it be with us all one day, our house will be shut up and empty. Men and women will tread where we have trod, new faces will come on the scene, new voices sound when

ours is still, we shall be not known, we have left the place, our place knoweth us no more.

Have you ever gone to a disused room in your house, where old neglected lumber is stored away? Believe me, such a room is often full of voices which seem to say to us, "It is appointed unto men once to die."

There, in the unused drawer, is the faded book from which your child learned her first lesson. Many a year of change and chance has passed since a child's bright eye looked on that yellow page, yet you seem to see the childish face again, though you know that a foreign land holds all that is mortal of your darling. So it is with the worn piano, once touched by fingers now cold in death, with the dim picture, with the treasured lock of hair, all these relics are to us as preachers, and they tell us we must die.

I passed lately by a house of business which I had not seen for a long time. When I passed it last it was full of work and activity, now the shutters were closed over its doors and windows, and a notice was posted up announcing that the owners *had removed to other premises.*

There, too, I saw a type of our life, and the ending of it: This life is full of removals to other premises. The child is removed from a happy home to the wider, harder world of school. The youth is removed to a still wider, harder world, where he must work his way, and

learn from that best of teachers—Experience. The mother who has fostered her children round her sees them removed one by one, till the home is empty—“there are no birds in last year’s nest.” Yes, this life is full of removals, and they should remind us of the last removal of all. Every change in our fortune, the death of every dear one around us, should recall to us the warning that man fleeth away as a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. But how are we to meet that death which *must* come to us? My brethren, we must go to Calvary and look at death there, we must go to an Easter Garden and look at a sepulchre from which the stone is rolled away; and then we shall understand what death is to the Christian, to him who has lived *for* Christ, and died *in* Christ. Death comes to Christ’s servant as a friend, bidding the pilgrim cross the river and rest in the good land at last, bidding the soldier of Jesus, whose fight is ended, to pass from the Church militant to the Church triumphant ; bidding the aching heart find comfort, and the tearful eye look up, since now “the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.” Yes, as says a writer of old, “death is a friend of ours, and he that is not ready to entertain him is not at home.” But death comes in another sort to the godless, the hardened, and the impenitent sinner ; it is no longer death the friend, it is death the avenger, death the stern taskmaster, calling on the sinner to pay the forfeit of his sin, since “by sin came death,” and to render in the

account of his mis-spent stewardship. The dying sinner cannot say with the dying saint—" welcome, sister death," but rather, like the guilty king, " hast thou found me, O mine enemy!" The Mahomedans picture the passage from this world to the next as a narrow bridge across an abyss of fire, and when the faithful go forth on the last journey, an angel supports them on either side, and leads them over the difficult passage. We believe that when God's people are called to their last journey, He giveth His angels charge, and they bear us up in their arms lest we should dash our foot against a stone of stumbling. The gate of death is one which all must approach with awe and reverence, but it loses its terrors if an angel opens it, since death has nothing terrible in it but what our life has made so. For those, however, whose life has been without God, death follows without God, and is full of horror. In place of the ministering angel of love about the path from this world to the next, and about the dying bed, the impenitent is haunted by the evil spirits whose slave he has been. Those who ministered to his vices, or taught him that sin was sweet, have nothing but bitterness for him now. The ghosts of evil deeds, done long ago, rise from their graves in a hideous resurrection, and crowd around the dying like creditors pressing for their claim. The sinner has sold himself to work iniquity, and the servant of sin receives his wages. He has long sown the wind, now comes the bitter end, the reaping of the *whirlwind*. He who has despised and rejected Jesus all his

life is too blind now to see the loving hand stretched out to him ; he has lived "without God in the world," he goes without God into the world to come. "It is appointed unto men once to die." Our death, my brethren, will be one of two kinds ; and it will be what our life makes it. If we live humbly striving to be God's servants, our death, wherever and whenever it may be, will be bright and glorious, like a sunset sky in summer. If we live a life of sin, apart from God, and die impenitent, our death will be black and stormy as a winter tempest. For those who live in Christ, to die is indeed gain ; since, as says a writer very sweetly, "as the second death is removed, this that thou art to pass through is beautified and sweetened. Its ugly visage becomes amiable ; when you look on it in Christ, and in His death, that puts such a pleasing comeliness upon it that whereas others flee from it with affright, the believer cannot choose but embrace it. He longs to be down in that bed of rest, since his Lord lay in it, and hath warmed that cold bed, and purified it with His fragrant body." To Christ's people the foulness of the grave is lost in the sweetness of the resurrection, "we smell the rose above the mould." "The rosemary," says a preacher of our day, "is still placed on the snowy shroud of the dead cottager, soothingly suggestive of the sweet and lasting perfume left behind in the dark tomb by the Rose of Sharon, Mary's Son, who once lay there." Strive then, my brethren, full of life, yet dying daily, to make your

house of life holy, a dwelling-place for the Holy Spirit, not a ruin, neglected and given over to the Power of Evil. Make God the architect of you life, since “unless the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it;” then death will be to you but a change of residence from an earthly home to one eternal in the heavens.

SERMON II.

THE FOUR LAST THINGS.

(*Aubent.*)

JUDGMENT.

HEBREWS IX., 27

"After this the Judgment."

I have read somewhere of a company of young men who were jesting on sacred things. Suddenly a funeral passed by, and one of the company, pointing to it, said, "There goes the last affair of all." "Not so," answered a quiet by-stander, "it is appointed to men once to die, and after this the Judgment." It is a common mistake to speak of a man's death as the end of him, it is simply for him the beginning of Eternity. Another very common mistake is to suppose that as soon as the soul is parted from the body, it is finally placed in Heaven or in Hell. If this were the

case, the Resurrection and the Judgment on the last great day would be unnecessary. It is not wonderful, however, that we should make mistakes about that mysterious future, of which we know so little. It is not wonderful that some of us should be tempted to say, "Ay, but to die, and go we know not where"; and to "feel a dread of something after death in that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns." The journey after death is along a road unknown to all, "for ye have not passed this way heretofore"; but God has revealed to us certain facts about the future, and one of these facts is the certainty of Judgment. First, however, let us see what we know of the condition of the dead between the day of death and the Day of Judgment. The Jews of old believed, as the Christian of to-day believes, that when men die, their dead bodies are laid in the grave to moulder into dust, but their living and immortal souls are reserved in a certain place till the final Judgment. A living soul cannot be in the grave. A living soul cannot be in Heaven or Hell, since the Day of Judgment has not yet come, nor has the general resurrection as yet given to men back their bodies. But our living souls must be somewhere after death, and what the Church teaches us about the matter is this, that at the moment of death the soul, just freed from the body, undergoes a certain kind of judgment, but that the final Judgment will not be till the end of the world. The soul and body will once more be joined together, and we shall "all appear before the Judg-

ment-seat of Christ : that every one may receive the things done in his body.” The full consequence of men’s sins cannot always be seen till long after their death, since “the evil that men do lives after them”; and at the Last Day all these consequences of our sins will have been made clear, and will be judged. Between the day of death and the day of judgment our souls are in safe keeping. Those who die as God’s people will be in Paradise, a place of rest and joy, looking forward to still more perfect rest and joy after the final Judgment. As there are degrees of happiness in this world, so we may believe there are in the world to come. The righteous in Paradise are happy, in Heaven they will be happier still. Those who die in their sins, shut out from God by their own fault, will await their judgment shut out from God. The sentence is not yet spoken, but they are waiting for it in their prison-house, with “a certain fearful looking for judgment.”

What we know of Our Saviour’s death teaches us that since as He was made like unto us in all things except sin, as He died so shall we die, where His soul went our soul will go, and as He rose again so shall we rise again.

When Jesus was dying on the Cross, He said to the penitent and pardoned thief, “This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.” This was the place of departed spirits of which David had spoken long before, saying, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.” Into that

place the *soul* of Jesus went, and the soul of the penitent thief. The *body* of Jesus was, as we know, laid in the rich man's sepulchre, from which it arose before it had seen corruption. When Jesus spoke of Paradise, He did not mean Heaven, since when the risen Saviour met Mary Magdalene in the garden, He said, "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended unto My Father." In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, we have a picture of two souls after death, but who have not yet come to the Day of Judgment. The one is at rest, the other in torment; and thus we learn that the place of departed spirits is of two kinds—a place of peace, and a place of misery. When we say in the Creed that Our Saviour "descended into Hell," we mean this place of departed spirits, *Hades*, or the 'covered place' as the word means in the original language, the same as that called by Jesus Paradise. To this same place, then, our souls will go, even as the soul of Jesus went after death. If you look at the last prayer in the Burial Service, you will see that we pray that when we shall depart this life we may rest in Him, as our hope is this our brother doth; and that at the general resurrection on the Last Day we may be found acceptable in God's sight, and receive the blessing which Jesus shall then pronounce to all who love and fear the Father. Here we declare that the dead person is in rest, although he has not yet come to judgment, or received his final blessing. No man, when he dies, can be said to be fit for the perfect joys of Heaven. So may

we believe that God in His infinite mercy, as well as justice, defers our sentence, puts off the final judgment day, that many who die unfit for Heaven may be gradually fitted for it. But there is nothing, remember, in the Bible which leads us to suppose that those who die obstinately in their sins will hereafter be changed and brought to a better state. If we die without God, we shall be for ever banished from Him.

And now let us think of the Judgment itself, when “in our flesh we shall see God,” and stand face to face before His great white throne, and the books shall be opened. What books are these? One, we may believe, is God’s Book, His Holy Word, which teaches us what we *ought* to have done. The other is the book of our life’s history, wherein is set down what we *have* done. We shall be face to face with God, and must give an account of the talents entrusted to us. The Householder has returned from the far country, and will reckon with His servants. The Bridegroom has come to the Marriage, the Master of the Vineyard has called for His labourers, the Lord will take account with His stewards.

We must account for the use we have made of the love of the Father who created us, of the Salvation of the Son who redeemed us, of the guiding of the Holy Ghost who sanctifies us. Who may abide that day? Even those who have loved their Lord on earth may tremble to approach the Judgment, since they are most conscious of their short-comings. But as the woman of the gospel

was forgiven in that she loved much, so shall it be with the loving ones at the Last Day. But for those who in this life loved themselves better than Jesus, and whose life, though perhaps unstained by what are called great sins, has been spent in selfishness, carelessness, and pleasure, for these the Day of Judgment will be one of terrible meetings.

There *will be the meeting with God.* It will indeed be terrible to look on those eyes of Jesus, so often wet with tears for their sake, from which they have turned away when they have sought them in love, now gazing on them only with reproach and with severity. It will indeed be terrible to be face to face with those precious wounds which they have made, as it were, to bleed afresh by their wilful sins. It will indeed be terrible to hear for the first time the voice of Jesus, and to know that His message to them is, “Depart from Me.”

Then *there will be the meeting with old, and perhaps forgotten, sins.* Every sin which has not been repented of remains, like an old debt, entered against us. The sins which we have committed in our youth will meet us in our age. The evil acts, the evil words, the evil thoughts of a life-time will be there to meet us and to accuse us. And not only the things which we ought *not* to have done will bring us into judgment; we shall be judged for the things which we ought to have done, and have neglected. Perhaps our neglected duties will form the heaviest part of the accusation against us. We may reckon them small

matters, but believe me on the Day of Judgment we shall discover that it is these same small matters which will ruin souls far more than the great sins. As a rule, men repent of some *great* sin, but thousands live a life of neglect, selfishness, coldness, and contempt of God's Word and Commandment; and for these things the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience. My brethren, would you like the secrets of one year of your life laid bare now? Well, on the Day of Judgment the secrets of all the years of your life will be exposed. God shall bring "every secret thing into judgment," whether it be of act, or thought, or word. There are two common mistakes which people make about the Judgment. Because they cannot bear to hear the *truth* about it, they try to explain away what God says in the Bible. One mistake is that it is only the notorious sinner, the murderer, the thief, the adulterer, to whom the Judgment will be terrible. I believe that these great sinners, if they have repented, will be far more acceptable in the Judgment than hundreds of so-called respectable people whose religion is a mere outside dress, who honour God with their lips, but whose heart is far from Him. It is not the poor outcast of the streets, the workhouse or the prison for whom we would tremble half as much, as for the well-fed, well-taught occupier of the Church pew, who trusts in his own righteousness, and fits the lessons of the Gospel on his neighbours, instead of practising them himself. What says Our Master of such people? "Verily, I say unto

you, the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you."

The second mistake which people make about the Judgment is that since Jesus died for sinners, God is not so strict as of old time. But there is no such teaching to be found in the Bible. God is "the same yesterday, today, and for ever"; "with Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." God speaks of sin and its punishment now as He did of old. If God had wished to tell us in these days something different about sin, He would have given a new edition of the Bible. The fact that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die for us, makes sin even more terrible than before.

My Brethren, we *must* all die, we *must* abide the Judgment. Let us try to make every day a day of Judgment, let us judge ourselves that we be not condemned of the Lord. Let us lay bare our secret sins by self-examination. Let us confess those sins to God, praying for true repentance, and grace to amend. This will bring us so near to the Cross of Jesus that the Precious Blood of pardon and cleansing shall drop upon us. There are many so-called Christians who stand looking upon the Cross like the crowd at Calvary, but too far off from it to obtain benefit. Let us strive to keep close to Jesus crucified in this life, and to crucify our sinful lusts and passions, since it is the Cross which is the true key to the gates of Heaven, and if we suffer with Jesus, we shall reign with Him.

SERMON III.

THE FOUR LAST THINGS.

(A**bent**.)

H E L L .

PSALM IX., 17.—(PRAYER BOOK VERSION.)

“The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the people that forget God.”

A great poet describes the Gate of Hell as bearing this inscription,—“All hope abandon ye who enter here.” This is the true character of Hell, it is an existence utterly *hopeless*; an existence of hopeless tasks, of unsatisfied longings, of bitter memories. However sad and varied our fortunes may be in this life, there is always hope of better things to come. The sinner has hope of repentance and pardon. The sick man has hope of recovery. The poor man of brighter fortunes. In this life we know that God will hear us, and will help us; in

Hell we have gone from God for ever, and so in Hell there is no hope. The Bible does not tell us much about the miseries of Hell for the same reason that it does not tell us much about the joys of Heaven ; language fails to describe the horror of the one, and the blessedness of the other. I know that people shrink from talking of Hell, and many profess to disbelieve in its existence. But if we give up Hell, we must give up Heaven, since the same God tells us of both in equally plain language. As Heaven means the Presence of God, so Hell means absence from God. In this life those who love God have a foretaste of Heaven, for they have His spiritual Presence to comfort and strengthen in the midst of life's changes and chances. In this life those who forsake God have a foretaste of Hell, since to be with sin and to be without God is to be in Hell. Here sin may appear sweet and pleasant, since our eyes are closed to its terrors. In Hell the sinner's eyes will be opened, and he will understand how hateful and bitter a thing sin is ; and whilst hating it he will still be its slave. The unsatisfied lust will remain, loathsome to its slave, yet ever present. The drunkard's fiery thirst will be ever present, the miser's greed, the angry man's fury will remain, yet will bring no pleasure with them. The cup of sinful pleasure, once so sweet, will be nothing but bitterness then, yet the slave of sin must ever drink of it. The dead sea fruit of unlawful indulgence will have turned to ashes, yet the slave of sin must eat of it. The sinful acts which send men to

Hell must ever be performed over and over again ; but what was a pleasure once, will be a curse then, because the sinner's eyes will be opened to see what sin really is, and what it is to have forsaken God. The old heathen legends describe the lost in Hell as ever condemned to perform impossible tasks. One is obliged continually to roll a stone up a hill, which falls back as fast as it is thrust forward. Others for ever pour water into a sieve. Surely here we have a shadow of the hopeless existence of a lost soul. But perhaps the greatest misery of Hell, next to banishment from God, will be the bitter memory of the past, the recollection of what might have been, the consciousness that it is our own fault that we are in Hell, and not in Heaven. In the fiery agony of remorse which is too late, in the sad memory of a wasted life and neglected chances, we find the mystery of the undying worm, and the unquenchable fire. Those who have been rescued from death by drowning at the last instant, tell us that the whole of their past life was remembered, as it were, in a moment of time. Who shall describe the visions of a mis-spent life, which will haunt the memory of the lost ? It has been truly said that we never rightly value blessings till we have lost them ; so the wicked will find, one day or other, the utter misery of having lost the love of God, and of God's people. Many a one will remember some tender loving friend, perhaps a wife, or child, whose sweetness was all wasted, and whose heart was broken by the hardened sinner. Oh ! believe me, these memories

will come back to haunt him in the aftertime ; “evil shall hunt the wicked person to overthrow him.” In that unending existence of hopeless, helpless remorse, the thought of many a blessing disregarded will force the lost one to learn the truth of the words—

“ Farewell ! I did not know thy worth,
But thou art gone, and now 'tis prized ;
So angels walked unknown on earth,
But when they flew were recognised.”

The drunken father, who wrecked his home by his sins, will remember the prayers of baby lips, which were all unheeded by him when they might have saved him. The pleading words of the sad-eyed wife will ring in the ears of the bad husband like an unending knell. The son who broke his mother's heart will know what it is to be broken-hearted through all eternity. But it is not only of the hardened, desperate sinner of whom the text speaks. People often put aside the terrors of Hell as having no concern for them, they are not ‘the wicked,’ they are not murderers, nor adulterers, nor thieves ; but they have neglected the last part of the text—“all the people that forget God.” The self-righteous hypocrite who comes to Church on Sunday, and cheats his neighbour during the rest of the week ; the man whose religion is only a sham, and who never loved God, or the way of His Commandments ; the proud who will not humble themselves before God ; the frivolous sons and daughters of fashion, who come to Church as to a concert, because it is

the fashion ; the careless and vicious who, by their bad example, lead others into sin—these are the people of whom we stand in doubt, and for whose future we tremble. It is the respectable sinner who is most in danger. My brethren, remember that unless the love of God rules in your hearts and directs your lives on earth, you cannot hope to enter into Heaven.

The German legend describes one who had sold himself to the powers of Darkness, as having a glimpse of the Heaven he had forfeited, and the Hell which he was to inhabit ; and the hardest part of his punishment was not so much the terrors of Hell as that he had seen Heaven, and knew from what he was for ever banished. For us all “ there is a time to get, and a time to lose,” and that time is now in this mortal life.

Any one may be lost, any one may be saved. If we repent of our sins, the Blood of Jesus cleanseth from *all* sin. Without true repentance the Blood of Jesus is not applied to us, and though He died for us, yet for the impenitent He died in vain.

The eternal future is before you, Death must come to you, the Judgment must follow, your eternity must be spent in Heaven or Hell. It is at your choice. “ See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil, therefore chose life.”

SERMON IV.

THE FOUR LAST THINGS.

(*Advent.*)

H E A V E N .

PSALM CVII., 30.

"He bringeth them unto their desired haven."

Have you ever watched a homeward-bound ship entering harbour after a long voyage? That ship is a wonderful type of a Christian entering the joys of Heaven. The ship bears evident marks of having been out in stormy seas, and of having encountered many perils. So does the Christian. Those rusty chains, and battered sides, and broken mast, tell of fierce battle with wind and tempest, perhaps with the more terrible enemy—Fire. That damaged rudder tells of hard steering through dangerous currents; but now, what matter, the ship is *going home*;

the colours, often wet, and rent by the storm, blow out bravely from the mast-head, the harbour is safely entered, the anchor is down, “ He bringeth them to the haven where they would be.”

“ Safe home, safe home in port,
Rent cordage, shattered deck,
Torn sails, provisions short,
And only not a wreck,
But, oh ! The joy upon the shore,
To tell our voyage perils o'er.”

So is it with the Christian. The sea of life is ever one of storm and tempest and danger to him who tries to steer a straight course for Heaven. “ They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters, these men see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep.”

Yes, the Christian mariners who go down to the wide sea of the world in the ship of the Church, and whose ensign is the Cross of Christ ; those not fearing “ to commit their life to a small piece of wood, and passing the rough sea in a weak vessel, are saved. For blessed is the wood whereby righteousness cometh.” These men who are occupying their business in great waters, the great waters of sorrow which seem to go even over their soul ; the great waters of repentance, which, though bitter in themselves, bring sweetness afterwards ; these men, indeed, see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep.

The earnest man, the praying man, the Christian man,

sees God's hand everywhere around him, and finds His wonders in the deep of sorrow, in the deep of self-denial, in the deep of sin, whence God giveth a glorious resurrection. The Christian traveller over the sea of life knows that it is at God's Word that the stormy wind of temptation ariseth, which lifteth up the waves thereof. There are times when his heart rejoices, and he is carried up to Heaven, and anon, he is depressed and fearful, and is carried down again to the deep. There are times when the best of men, in spite of their earnest longing to do right, in spite of their good resolutions, and plans for a higher life, reel to and fro in their endeavours, and are at their wit's end. Then it is that Christians know where to look for help, they cry unto the Lord Jesus, and He delivereth them out of their distress. He maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still. Instead of the tempest of trial and temptation, the Holy Spirit comes like a dove, and once more broods over the waters. So it is that Jesus deals with all of us who love Him. He suffers the stormy wind to beat upon our vessel sometimes, and it is hard work to keep our course; but He hears our cry when we call upon Him, and presently there is a great calm. And then at last we are glad because we are at rest, and so He bringeth us to the haven where we would be. For a time we are in Paradise, waiting in the ante-room of the King's palace with a goodly company, till the time comes when we shall rise and go to an audience with Our King, and so shall we be ever

with the Lord. Yes, *ever* with the Lord, that means Heaven, my brethren. Here we are with Him sometimes by the touch and sight of faith. Here we can sometimes draw near in the press, and touch the hem of His garment. Too often we are separated from Him by our wayward tempers, and our frequent sins ; but to be in Heaven is to be ever with the Lord, and to behold the fair beauty of the Lord with loving eyes.

The highest aim of a Christian should be to see Jesus, and to be with Him always. So the hearts of all who love the Lord yearn for Heaven as their home, when their work is done, their schooling finished, their voyage over.

When my boy went first to school, his thoughts turned back very wistfully to his home, and he wrote to me, "How I long to see the dear old place." So our thoughts turn lovingly towards Heaven, and we feel that we long to see that dear place from which the sin of the first Adam has banished us, but which the Merits of Jesus, the Second Adam, have given back to us, our dear old home.

There are some among us, however, who are content to long for Heaven, instead of steadfastly setting their faces to go there. Others prefer this earth to Heaven. It is so with some of us. We have tasted of the things of this world, and they are very sweet. But the sweet earth robs us of all desire for Heaven, and one day it will turn to ashes in our mouths. We constantly hear of those who want to *better themselves* on earth, to get on, to go

higher. They long for a position of more wealth, of more honour, of better society, and they are right ; but they don't go far enough. We should all strive to *better ourselves*—that is, to amend our lives day by day, that we may one day receive the unsearchable riches of Christ, the honour of a place at the right hand of God, the society of saints and angels. But alas ! the sweet earth has spoilt our taste for Heaven, and so instead of giving all our heart to Jesus, we try, like insolvent debtors, to pay, as it were, a small dividend, instead of giving up all to Him, whose we are and whom we serve. Here is the mistake in the religion of so many of us, it is not the religion of love, the religion of *worship*. It is merely the religion of fear, or the religion of form, or the religion of selfishness. Some profess religion because they fear God as a Judge. Others profess religion because it is a respectable custom. Others because they want to get all they can from God. All such religion is vain. True religion is one of love for God, and the fruit of that is *worship*, the giving the best of what we have to Him who giveth all.

In earth this worship is of necessity imperfect. But if we try honestly to do our duty where God has put us, working in all for Him, making His will our law, His glory our end and aim, we offer Him worship in our daily work ; and one day He will give us Heaven, which means a life of *perfect* worship, unmarred by selfishness, by frailty, or by sin. But how can those who never really wor-

shipped God here expect to enter such a Heaven as this? How can those who find the time given to God here the most wearisome, expect to spend an eternity with Him? How can those who grudgingly give to God here the worst they have, the least of their thoughts, the least of their money, expect that God will give them their heart's desire in Heaven? Many of us live and act and talk as though we might give up all our care and thought to this life, and that when our bodies are worn out and we die, God will suddenly change our whole nature and fit us for Heaven. But it may not be. Our future life depends on our present life. A man's character is not changed after death. The man who dies earthly-minded does not become Heavenly-minded hereafter. The man who lives and dies without loving God will never learn to love Him. The key-note of our everlasting future is struck here, and it is either the key-note of the eternal music of Heaven, or of the unending discord of Hell. In a word, we must have something of Heaven in our earthly life now, if we are to enter Heaven when earth is done with. I read lately of the funeral of a man in a great German city. He was carried to a cemetery over whose gate these words were written—"There is no hereafter, and we shall never meet again." Brethren, if we believed *that*, then should we be of all men most miserable. Rather let us believe that there is a blessed hereafter for those who have tried here to do their duty to God and their neighbour. Rather let us believe that

we *shall* meet again those who have travelled to the better land before us, and that we shall one day not only meet old friends again, but commence new friendships never to be broken more.

“ Where no shadows shall bewilder,
Where life's vain parade is o'er ;
Where the sleep of sin is broken,
And the dreamer dreams no more ;
Where the bond is never severed—
Partings, clasplings, sob and moan—
Midnight waking, twilight weeping,
Heavy noon tide—all are done ;
Where the child has found its mother,
Where the mother finds the child,
Where dear families are gathered,
That were scatter'd on the wild :
Brothers, we shall meet and rest
'Mid the holy and the blest.”

SERMON V.

SWEEPING THE HOUSE.

(*Before Lent.*)

II. KINGS IV., 26.

"Is it well with thee?"

THIS is a good question to ask ourselves at any time, and especially now, when we are close upon the season of Lent. I want you to make good use of this Lent, and not to waste its solemn hours, as we have so often done in the Lents now gone by for ever. You know that the Church has appointed this season as a special time for self-examination, for looking at our sins, for setting our spiritual house in order. It is an opportunity of taking a bold stand against our besetting faults, for giving up bad habits, for making a fresh start. You all remember the

parable of the woman in the Gospel, who had lost a piece of money. She swept the house diligently till she found it. Now you may have lost something like that money. You may have lost your innocence, or your peace of mind, or your happiness, through some sin. Some of you who hear me now, may have lost that love for God, and that trust in Him, which you once had. Some sin has come between you and God. You feel sadly that you are not as you used to be. There is that fault, that bad habit, that sin, clinging to you, and spoiling all your life. Think now, even while I speak, is it not so? Is it well with thee? I don't mean is it well with your bodies, or your worldly concerns, is it well with your soul? Have you lost nothing? No precious coins from God's treasury, no blessed hope, no good resolve, no holy joy? Oh! live this Lent properly, and do as the woman of the Gospel did, *sweep the house*. A shut-up and neglected house becomes choked with dust, and all foul, unwholesome things. So with our spiritual lives, the longer we delay setting our house in order, the worse it becomes, and the harder the task. Begin now, this Lent, *sweep the house*. It may be the dust of sloth, or of indifference, or of selfishness, or of worldliness, or of bad company, which is filling your house. Sweep the house diligently, till you have found what you have lost—rest and joy with God. But you cannot do this by yourselves, You must begin with Jesus Christ. It is useless for you to determine to make a resolution now, to take a fresh start now. You

will fall like a feeble child trying to walk alone. Rather make up your mind to go to Jesus now, and to ask Him to help you. Ask Him to open your eyes, that you may see your true state. Ask Him to give you courage to look into your own heart. You will need this courage and this strength. There are many brave men and women who are afraid to look into their own hearts. Well, then, begin with Jesus now, go to Him now in prayer. Do not try to help yourselves without Jesus. Do not, like another woman of the Gospel, spend all upon other doctors, and last of all come to Jesus to be cured. Begin with Jesus. Ask Him to show you your sins; to help you in sweeping the house, in examining yourselves. Ask Him to forgive you for the past, and to restore to you that which you have lost, that you may say, "it is well." Jesus will do this if you ask Him faithfully, He will send the Holy Ghost to sanctify you, to make you holy, and when He asks you, "is it well with thee?" you can answer truly, "it is well." But how are you to continue well? You must not only begin with Jesus, you must *abide* in Him. "Abide in Me, and I in you. He that abideth in Me, and I in Him, the same beareth much fruit." Here is the true test whether or not it is well with us. It is not a question of talking about our faith, and our love for Jesus, "by their fruit ye shall know them." One man judges another by what he *does*, not by what he says, so does God. So long as we abide with Christ, we bring forth good fruits, fruits meet for repentance, all is well.

But how are we to abide in Him? By the means which He Himself has given us. Keep close to Jesus by praying constantly to Him. When you pray earnestly you may be sure that you are holding Jesus by the hand, as it were. Keep close to Him by watching your lives daily, your words, your thoughts, that you may think no evil, and that your lips speak no guile. Keep close to Him by coming as often as possible to His holy Church, where He has promised to be with His faithful people. When you come to Church, let this be your prayer—"We would see Jesus." Keep close to Him by coming frequently to the Altar of the Blessed Sacrament. Nowhere else can you realise the near Presence of Jesus so fully. There Jesus will come to your troubled heart, and whisper, "Peace, it is I." Once more, "Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?" I ask you, are you husbands and wives doing as much as you might to help each other to Heaven? "As the husband is the wife is"; you can help each other to get nearer to God, or you can hinder each other—which are you doing? I have seen many a promising man spoiled by marrying a careless, indifferent woman. And I have known many earnest, God-fearing girls led away from God and His Church by bad husbands. Some of you wives are Communicants, and your husbands are not, although they come to Church. Now if it is right for you to come to the Altar, it is right for them. If it is necessary for you, it is necessary for them. Here, then, is another work for

you during this Lent, try to lead your husbands to the feet of Jesus, pray for them, that they may eat of that Holy Food and live. And is it well with the child? We know what we are teaching His children in Church and in School, but what do *you* teach them at home? The home school is the one whose lessons will last longest. The children will be more what you make them, than what we make them. Woe unto you if by your example at home, by your tempers, or your bad words, you make one of these little ones to offend. Try to use this Lent well and sensibly. Make it useful to your souls. First ask the question, "Is it well?" Then, sweep the house diligently, and there will be joy among the angels of God, and in your own hearts, when, after repentance, you have found the peace of God which passeth all understanding. May you all find that which, by your own frailty, or by the malice of the Devil, you have lost, and when you kneel before the Easter Altar of the Risen Jesus may you be able to say with truth, "It is good for us to be here,—it is well."

SERMON VI.

THE CONQUERING LIFE.

(Lent.)

EXODUS XXIII. 30.

"By little and little I will drive them out from before thee."

No great work is ever done in a hurry. To develope a great scientific discovery, to paint a great picture, to write an immortal poem, to become a minister, or a famous general,—to do anything great requires time, patience, and perseverance. These things are done by degrees, "little by little." Milton did not write *Paradise Lost* at a sitting, nor did Shakespeare compose *Hamlet* in a day. The greatest writers must begin with the Alphabet, the most famous musicians once picked out their notes laboriously; a child must learn to draw a straight line before he can develope into a Titian or a Michel Angelo.

Wellington must learn in the Eton playing-fields the endurance and the discipline which gained Waterloo. The upward road to success must always be over difficulties, and these are only overcome "little by little." The man who would conquer must not expect to do so at once, by one headlong charge. He must determine to go on, slowly perhaps, but ever forward, no matter what obstacle stands in his way; his motto that engraved on the old warrior's sword, "A way I will find, or will make." The man who takes this as his maxim, and goes on bravely, trusting in God, and doing his duty, will overcome all difficulties.

Yes, a man to succeed must be self-reliant, he must trust to God and his own right arm. When Stephen Colonna was taken prisoner by his enemies, and they sneeringly asked him, "Where is now your stronghold?" he laid his hand upon his heart, and answered, "Here." A man must dare to stand alone. If Clive had leaned upon others instead of himself, he would not have matched his few European and native troops against the overwhelming masses of Bengal, and have won the battle of Plassey. If Columbus had been discouraged by delays, and obstacles, and disappointments, he would never have found America. We have seen, then, that success means the overcoming of difficulties, by determination, by self-reliance, by patience, "little by little." This is equally true of the noblest of all pursuits, the pursuit of holiness, of the grandest and purest work, work for God; of the

hardest and most splendid of victories, victory over self. When Israel of old set out to go to the land of Canaan, they came to the Red Sea. There they were bidden to stand still, and see the salvation of God. But when they had come to the borders of Canaan, the command was no longer to stand still, but to go forward. They were to take sword in hand, and fight, and God promised to drive out their enemies before them "little by little." So is it with God's people now. At Holy Baptism we are brought to the Red Sea of Christ's cleansing Blood, feeble infants, who can do nothing. We are bidden to stand still, and see the salvation of God. But it is not so after we have passed through, and have began life in the world. It has been well said that "we all have a Canaan to conquer." Our special sins, and temptations, and trials, are our Canaan which must be conquered. For each of us there is a Jericho of evil lusts, and passions and tempers, which we must compass many a day, till at length the walls fall down before the victorious blast of our trumpet. In this warfare, this progress, this life of conquest, the same qualities are required as for earthly success, and the progress in both cases will be "little by little." But there is this great difference between the pursuit of worldly success, and that of holiness. In the one case the man works that he may succeed; in the other he works because *it is right*. He is satisfied to do his duty, though he may never see the fruit of it here. The very best of men sometimes labour and wait, and fight and pray, and

bear persecution and trial, and never seem to win success, or gain a name. Such as these are content to look forward. Such as these are content to wait, because they know that when their Canaan is conquered, there remaineth a rest for the people of God. The heart-ache and the pain, the misunderstandings and the cruel judgments, are very hard to bear, but God's servant knows that a time will come when they will say of him—

“Aye, they are o'er, his pains and his endeavour,
Our scant acknowledgment, and frequent wrong ;
Hushed are all tones of praise and blame for ever,
For those who listen to the Angels' song.
—— In earthly races
To winners only do the heralds call,
But oh ! in yonder high and Heavenly places
Success is nothing, but the Work is all.”

This, then, is the true life worth living. Not the successful life, nor the brilliant life, nor the life of fame and praise, but the life of duty, the life of seeking after God, the Christian life. Every man should try to do his best, whatever work he undertakes. It is a good thing to have written a book which will live, or to have done the State some service which will never be forgotten ; but the name of a righteous man is the best monument, and will outlast marble, and be more durable than brass, since

“Howe'er it be, it seems to me
'Tis only noble to be good.”

The victories which have been gained over ourselves will

be remembered when the triumphs of Cæsar and Hannibal are uncared for. "He conquered himself" is a better epitaph than "He conquered the world." Mary's gift to Jesus is known where the eloquence of Demosthenes and the might of Alexander were never heard of, and better than all the praises carved upon gorgeous tombs is that loving order, "Let her alone, she hath done what she could."

" All heads must come
To the cold tomb,
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust."

Well, then, in this daily life of ours we all have a Canaan to conquer; and God promises that if we do our part, He will drive out our foes "little by little." No one becomes bad all at once, nor good all at once. The oak takes time to grow, so does the Christian. Our life, if it be the true life, will be a gradual growth in grace, a daily dying to sin, and rising again unto righteousness, a daily mortifying of our evil and corrupt affections, and a daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living. We were pledged to this life in Holy Baptism, and to give us strength to lead it the Holy Spirit comes to us in Confirmation, and the Blessed Food of the Altar feeds our soul. This life is a battle between right and wrong, between God's Will and our own Will, and it must be fought daily. "Little by little" we shall advance, mastering some temptation, crushing down some rebellious wish, getting nearer

and nearer to Him who leads the way, our Great Example, Jesus Christ. In earthly armies the most illustrious general commences with learning the simplest drills. In earthly schools the most famous scholars begin at the bottom of the very lowest class. So in Christ's army, and in Christ's School, we learn His lessons "little by little."

No one, I have said, becomes good all at once. When a man is converted, he does not, as some people imagine, step into the front rank as though he had learnt all there is to learn. Such an one is only beginning to learn. Before his conversion he knew nothing, and cared nothing, about God. Now he begins to come to School, now he begins to march in the army against his Canaan. Day by day he learns a lesson, he goes stumbling along life's path, feeling his way, falling frequently, making many mistakes, but learning something. Day by day he goes on with the army of Christ's Church, fighting to conquer his Canaan, and happy is he if he wins but an inch of ground a day, if he can count *one* triumph gained over himself. No man or woman ever becomes gentle, or patient, or self-denying, or brave on a sudden, it comes to us "little by little."

And no one becomes bad all at once.

The vilest of criminals were blameless children once. Robespierre, revelling in the innocent blood of the victims of the French Revolution, once prattled in a nursery. The first Napoleon, sacrificing thousands to his fierce ambition, once knelt as a gentle boy at his first Com-



munition. The drunkard whom we see reeling in our streets, once went to a Sunday School, that shameless woman, lost to all sense of decency, was once a modest maiden. "Little by little" those who forsake God go down hill. The beginnings of the deadliest diseases arise from tiny seeds in the air or water, and the beginnings of evil start from a small commencement. The first glass too much leads, "little by little," to the drunkard's hideous death-bed; the first theft of a trifling article leads, "little by little," to the dock and the scaffold; the first whisper of impurity lights a fire which, "little by little," burns up soul and body alike.

I speak to two classes of people now. To those of you who are honestly trying to lead the life of Christian duty, whose object is to do what *is right* at any cost, I say go forward, be strong and of a good courage, the Lord He it is that doth go before you, and "little by little" He will drive out your foes before you. To those who, instead of trying to conquer Canaan, are mingling with its sins, and becoming partakers of its abominations, and are growing worse and worse "little by little," I say, turn back to the Lord Jesus Christ, against whom you have sinned and done this evil, lest the light of mercy be for ever hid from your eyes.

SERMON VII.

THE COURAGEOUS LIFE.

(*Lent.*)

JOSHUA I. 7.

"Only be strong, and very courageous."

ALL true men honour the brave. Most of us would rather see a man wearing the bit of gun-metal on his breast which is called the Victoria Cross, than look at a Crowned head. When the news comes home of a great battle fought by English soldiers or sailors, every story of desperate courage makes our hearts throb. Did you ever read how they took the Cashmere Gate at Delhi? It was in the time of the terrible Indian Mutiny, and the city was held by the rebel Sepoys, the cruel murderers of innocent women and children. Five columns of our

troops were prepared to take Delhi by storm. In the early morning they were lying down on the ground, waiting the signal to advance, which signal was the blowing in of the Cashmere Gate. For this service of desperate danger there were told off two officers, three non-commissioned officers, a bugler, and some native troops. The first of the officers rushed quickly forward, and under a storm of bullets arranged the bags of gunpowder. Then the second of the officers advanced to fire the train, and fell, shot through the arm and legs. As he fell he handed the burning port-fire to a sergeant, who was shot dead before he could fire the powder. A corporal snatched the match from his dead comrade's hand, and lighted the train, though the next moment he sank mortally wounded; and then the vast Cashmere Gate was blown to atoms, and as the bugler sounded the advance, the Fifty-second Regiment dashed with a cheer through the gateway. Of that brave party which tried to blow in the Cashmere Gate, only a sergeant and the bugler lived to wear the Victoria Cross.

Now, English History contains hundreds of such stories of courage. But this is not the highest kind of courage. The bravery of the hero about which all the world talks, is not so great as that of the Christian about whom the world knows and cares nothing. It often requires a braver man to say "*No,*" than to take the Cashmere Gate at Delhi. As says a thoughtful writer, "perfect courage consists in doing without a witness all that we

could do if the whole world were looking on." It is comparatively easy to be brave in the rush of battle, with the examples of others around us ; but to fight the battle of life *alone*, to struggle against temptation in secret prayer, to bear false judgments and cruel misunderstandings, to bow meekly before the storm of sorrow, to sacrifice our own will for the sake of others—this requires a courage greater than that of the greatest military hero that ever lived. To find an example of this true courage, of the perfectly brave life, we must not look into the History of England, or of any other country, but into the Gospel, which tells of One—

"The best of Men who e'er wore earth about Him,
The first true Gentleman that ever breathed."

—the Man Christ Jesus. Yes, the story of all heroes pales before the heroism of Jesus. To bear with patience requires greater courage than any act of bravery. Jesus has given us a perfect example of true courage by self-sacrifice, by self-denial, by patience. He, God Almighty, knowing His power, knowing that He is God, worked for years in a humble workshop, and suffered Himself to be called the Carpenter's Son. When He began His Ministry, He knew that the whole world would be against Him. He never opened His Mouth without making the people angry. His religion was utterly opposed to the teachers around Him, as opposite to the views of Jew or Gentile alike as light is to darkness. It is easy enough to preach to people who believe and delight in your words, but what

must it be to go on preaching doctrines which make people hate you more and more, and more and more determine on your death? And this is what Jesus did. He came to be the Witness of the Truth, and although He knew that His witness would cost Him pain and insult, and agony, and death, He never hesitated.

Look at Jesus in the Agony of Gethsemane. Though as Man, He shrank from it, and as God He could have avoided it, yet He drained the cup of pain to the dregs. Look at Him before Herod and Pilate. Though one word from Him would have overthrown all their devices, and have crushed them to the earth, He never said it; “He opened not His Mouth.” Look at Him blindfolded, beaten, spit upon; one word from Him would have set Him free, yet He never said it. See Him hanging, hour after hour, on the Cross, bearing such agony as you and I cannot imagine, one word would have delivered Him, He was asked to say it, but He never did.

Here we learn what true courage is; the courage of self-sacrifice, of bearing all things for the truth's sake. Any man can resent an injury, it requires a brave man to bear it patiently. I can tell you a true story of such bravery. It is only the story of a poor mill-girl, who lived in my dear friend's parish in the North of England. She had been led, under my friend's teaching, to become a regular Communicant, and because of this she had to bear every kind of persecution, chiefly from members of

her own family. They not only tried every kind of insult to vex her, but even blasphemed the Blessed Sacrament itself. At last the poor girl came to my friend, saying, "What shall I do, I cannot bear it much longer." And he reminded her of her Saviour's sorrow, and how that when He was reviled "He opened not His mouth." At last, one day this true heroine of humble life fell down dead from heart disease, and when they removed her dress, they found a piece of paper stitched inside it, on which were these words—"He opened not His mouth." She had won her victory, and now she rests "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." Be sure that if you try to do right, you will meet with persecution. The man who dares to stand alone, to do his duty, no matter what the world says, must expect insult, ridicule, false judgment. Of all kinds of courage, moral courage, which enables a man to say or do a thing because it is right, is the highest. Too many of us stay to ask, "What will people say of me? Can I afford to do this? Shall I lose my friends by following this course?" This is mere cowardice. The question for each of us is, "*Ought* I to do this or that?" When Jesus spoke His Message, He did not stay to ask if it would be pleasing, and so He went to His Cross. When S. Stephen spoke the truth as it is in Jesus, they stoned him. When Savonarola exposed the vices of his day, they burned him to death. All men who strive to do right are hated of the wicked. I say to you, "Be strong,

and very courageous" to do what is right, at any cost.

Again, true Christian courage means self-sacrifice. The earthly life of Jesus is a perfect example of this. He gave up all for the sake of others ; and *we* who are called by His Name are often so utterly selfish ! Yet we must give up something if we are to be like Christ, and being a Christian, remember, means being like Christ. I tell you, my brothers, it requires greater courage to give up something for Christ's sake, than to lead a forlorn hope or storm a battery. I think those who have given up time, and money, and strength, and health, and pleasure, for the sake of others,—the brave Priest, or doctor, or nurse, or district visitor, who have visited the sick, and faced fever, and small pox, and hideous sights, and foul smells, for Christ's dear sake, will stand higher in God's Book than any earthly conqueror of them all.

Let me tell you a true story of self-sacrifice. Some years ago a navvy was working at a tunnel on the Leeds and Manchester Railway. His work was very dangerous ; it was at the top of a shaft two hundred feet deep, with sides and bottom of solid rock. His duty was to raise the trucks filled from below, and to return them empty to his mates at the bottom of the shaft. If a chain broke, or a stone got loose from the waggons, this man had to give a particular cry of warning to those below, that they might at once go under shelter. One day, when at work, his foot slipped. He must have known that all was over for

him, and that there was nothing for him but to be hurled down the shaft, and to lie crushed and dead at the bottom. He must have known, too, that if he screamed out all his mates would come running out at the unusual cry, and be killed or injured by his fall. What, then, did he do ? He uttered the usual warning cry, the men below got under shelter, and the next moment this hero of common life lay a shapeless mass upon the rock. He had sacrificed himself for the sake of others.

My brethren, let us humbly strive to make the life of the Lord Jesus Christ the pattern of our life. None other is worth living. Let us be able to say with truth, "The life that I live now in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Let our constant prayer be for courage ; courage to bear patiently the Cross laid upon us ; courage to do right, and to witness to the truth at all times, and at all costs ; courage to deny ourselves for the sake of others.

" The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we need to ask,
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God.

SERMON VIII.

THE CONSISTENT LIFE.

(*Lent.*)

S. JOHN VI. 28.

"What shall we do that we might work the works of God?"

I HAVE said in a previous sermon, that the only life worth living is the Christian life, formed humbly after the pattern of the Life of Jesus. I have said also that such a life must be one of daily battle, and conquest of self, and of all which keeps us back from holiness, without which no man can see the Lord. We have seen also that such a life requires courage, self-denial, and self-sacrifice. The Christian life is essentially a working life, the idle Christian should change his name. Our religion is one of active work, not of dreamy contemplation. We are

all members of one family, the Church of Christ ; we are soldiers of one army, with the same work to do, the same battle to fight, the same prize to win, and in his army there are no Christians "unattached." Unfortunately, however, there are many among us who are playing at religion instead of working at it. There are too many idle Christians around us. There are too many Jonahs lying asleep in the sides of the vessel, instead of awaking, and calling upon their God ; too many Balaams talking piously whilst there is evil in their hearts ; too many Elijahs hiding away, instead of facing danger for the truth's sake. There are plenty of people who are willing to be saved, provided that they have nothing to do in the matter ; and quite ready to go to Heaven, if God will carry them there without any effort on their own part. Too many of us wish to profess a religion which costs nothing, no work, no time, no money. A man once boasted to a friend that his religion only cost him a shilling a year ; and his friend assured him that that was more than it was worth.

The average so-called Christian of to-day wants his religion made very easy for him, because he is idle, and not in earnest. If men really believed that religion is the one concern of life, and all other things but trifles in comparison, they would find no work for God too hard, no self-denial too severe, no offering to Jesus half sufficient. We hear much of unbelief in these days, and doubtless there is much unbelief prevalent. We are told that clever

men become unbelievers by reading books of science, and that working men become so by reading infidel books and newspapers. I do not believe it. If you ask me what it is which makes men doubt, I answer that it is not science, nor infidel publications, so much as the idle, inconsistent Christians. As long as men can point to professing believers, even communicants perhaps, and show that they are not in earnest ; that their religion is only an outside show ; that they say one thing in Church, and another thing out of Church ; that their lives are not in keeping with their profession ; so long will unbelief and irreligion grow among us.

Every Christian admits that the life of Christ is the model of the life which he himself should try to live ; and that the teachings of the Gospel should be the rule of his conduct. And yet how utterly different is the life of the average professing Christian from that laid down in the Gospel. There we read of a life dedicated to God's service, where His will is the rule and mainspring of all our actions, where the best of our time, our work, our thought, is given to doing what God would have us to do. Such is the Christian life as shown in the Gospels. Now look at most of our lives. Many of us never think of God at all, except in Church, and not always there. We are bidden to show forth our faith not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to God's service, and by walking before Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. And yet what do most of us give up

for Him? Some of us give two hours once a week, and often do that grudgingly. Why do we need to use so much persuasion to lead people to Church, or to take an interest in religion out of Church? Simply because they have not learnt to look upon the Worship of God as the highest and best part of their life. Instead of God's Service being the first thing with them it is the last. Hence it comes to pass that so much of our so-called religion is not religion at all; it is not real, but merely a sort of fashion. Hence, too, people want to have their religious duties made easy for them, although they profess to belong to the same Church as Jesus Christ, and the first apostles. We can scarcely imagine S. Paul wanting a soft cushion to sit on in Church, or S. Peter staying away from God's House because it rained. We can scarcely picture the holy women, whose praise is in the Gospel, refusing to attend a service because their clothes were not good enough, or because the service interfered with their dinner hour. But, you answer me, times are so different now, habits and customs have so changed. Yes, but the Gospel has not. Men and women change, fashions alter, but Christ does not change, nor does His Gospel alter. We hear much in these days about revising the translation of the New Testament, there are plenty of people who would like to revise its teachings as well. If what Jesus taught eighteen hundred and eighty years ago was true then, it is true now. If the Gospel was right in the first century, it is right in the nineteenth century. Either we must

believe what our Lord says in his Gospel, or not; if we do believe, how can we reconcile the life of the average Christian with that teaching? I do not say that there is not abundance of religious profession, I do not say that there are not multitudes of Churches, an increased number of services, earnest sermons, plenty of Bibles and Prayer Books; but with all these, there is a great want of real Christianity in men's lives.

People will read about Christ, talk about Christ, sing about Christ, preach about Christ, anything but live like Christ.

There is a want of reality in our religion. It is too often merely a Sunday exercise. We all think we must have a Gospel for one day in the week, but we think we can do without it for the other six days. The teachings, the rules, the warnings of the Bible, heard in Church on Sunday, do not get into the shop, and the ledger, and the business life, and the home life, on Monday. The commandment about taking God's name in vain, to which you responded so earnestly in Church,—“Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law”—was quite forgotten on Monday when you swore at your farm labourer. The lesson about forgiving our enemies, to which you listened so intently in Church, was no more remembered when someone offered you a slight. In a word, too many people use religion, like a dose of medicine, once a week, instead of living on it as the daily food

of the soul. Many of you, my brethren, if you spoke the whole truth, would be forced to confess that you have no objection to religion, provided it does not require too much from you. You like to think of religion, and to hear of it once a week, because it is comfortable and respectable. But on all other days you have your business and work to occupy you, and religion must not interfere with that, except in the way of a hurried prayer that God will take care of you. That is the religion of a great many people nowadays, and yet it is not religion at all, it is mere selfishness.

The two great mistakes which people make are, they do not understand what Worship means, and they do not set a right value on personal religion, a religion which we take about with us everywhere and always. They do not make Jesus Christ their companion and guide in every day life. They want to leave the Lord Jesus in Church, instead of inviting Him to their homes, and to their place of work. A soldier is known by his uniform wherever he is, a Christian should be known in every place by his behaviour. Can that drunken, swearing man, whom we saw in the market to-day, be the same man who was saying holy words in God's Church but yesterday? Can the shop-keeper who is selling inferior goods at the highest price on Monday, be the same man who prayed so devoutly on Sunday? Can this passionate woman, furious with her servants or her children, be the same as she who sang of "Jesus, meek and gentle," so

lately? Yes, these people have not learned what true religion means, they have not understood what it is to "walk worthy of the vocation whereto they are called."

What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? That the one object of a true life is to follow the example of Jesus Christ every day, and everywhere, in our work, in our words, in our dealings with our fellow men. We should look on the example of Jesus Christ as living, and as set forth not in a dead letter, but in a living Gospel. Too many of us seem to think that the example of Jesus was very good for the early ages of the Church, very useful and right for S. Paul, and the primitive Christians, but not for us in the nineteenth century. But if that divine Example be not for us, where are we to look for another? If the Gospel be not for us, who will write us another? If Jesus is not "this same Jesus," we know nothing of Him. My brethren, you can make a new gospel for yourselves, many do! you can choose the Gospel according to selfishness, or the gospel according to pride, or according to mammon, but it will not be the Gospel according to God, and it will not show you the way to Heaven.

Try to make your life in keeping with the teaching of God's Gospel. Let your work be such that you can pray about it without blasphemy. Let it be of such a sort that you need not fear to know that it is noted in God's book. Never mind what the world says, think what God says, and what He will say on the Day of Judgment,

when the false, lying, hypocritical world will be condemned.

As Christians, we must not follow the multitude to do evil. We must dare to stand alone ; we must dare to be honest in a shop, or market, though all be against us. We must dare to stand up for the honour of Jesus Christ in company, though we be the only one on His side. We must dare to speak the truth and suffer loss, though another makes double gain by telling a lie. Let us be honest, to-day, and say either—"this Gospel is not for us, I cannot live the life laid down there, I do not wish to live it ;" or, on the other hand, let us resolve, by God's help, to lead a more consistent life, to make the Will of God, as revealed by His Son, the guide of our every act, so that we may say with truth, "Lord, I will follow Thee, whithersoever Thou goest."

SERMON IX.

THE REJOICING LIFE.

ACTS VIII. 39.

"He went on his way rejoicing."

I HAVE read of a man who, though possessing health and strength, and all the good things of this life, declared that he had never known one happy day. And I have read in my Bible of one who "went on his way rejoicing." What made all the difference in the lives of these two men? Just this—the one had learned to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour and his Friend, the other had not so learned Christ. Of all secrets the best to discover is the secret of a happy life. Some people imagine that it consists in having plenty of money, but it is not so.

Money can do much, but it cannot cure a sick man, or sweeten a bad temper. Some imagine that the secret of happiness lies in having good health, but it is not so. Health is a priceless blessing, but it is not everything. A healthy man is not happy if he is discontented. Some have thought that to be happy means to hold a position of power and influence ; but we know that many of the greatest Statesmen and rulers have been haunted by fears and anxieties. We know that Cromwell wore a coat of mail day and night next his skin, and constantly feared assassination. Solomon in all his glory assures us that he found all vanity, and many a king has discovered that “uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.” Few of us in these days would care to exchange places with the Emperor of all the Russias.

Others have fancied that happiness may be found in scenes of continual amusement and dissipation, but they are mistaken. There was once a famous comic actor whose appearance always created laughter. Once he went to consult a doctor who did not know him, and told him of his low spirits and bad health. The doctor advised him to go and see the famous clown, and his patient answered, “ Alas ! I am that unhappy man.” No, the secret of a happy life is not to be found in any of these things—it is to be found in God. David had discovered it when he said, “ Sing we merrily unto God,—I will praise Him with the best member that I have,—the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom then shall I fear ;—I will rejoice

in Thy salvation." S. Paul had found out the secret when he wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, rejoice." The Blessed Virgin Mary had learned the secret when she sang, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." The Ethiopian Steward of the Queen, of whom the text tells us, had found out the secret, when S. Philip preached Christ to him, "and he went on his way rejoicing." But why is it that we have so many gloomy Christians among us, with no sunshine in their lives, no music in their homes; who find life one long, hard hill, and never get any nearer the Heavenly prospect at the top? It is because they have not learned religion in the right way; they have not learned to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Friend. They believe in Him as someone else's Saviour perhaps, but have not realized Him as their own. We have many such people at Church day after day. This religion does not seem to agree with them, it makes them miserable rather than happy. And this is not because they have too much religion, as the scoffers say, but because they have not enough. Be sure of this, that if your religion does not make you go on your way rejoicing, you have not learned it aright, you have not realized Jesus as being your Saviour and Friend. But why are we who come to Church not equally happy? We all hear the same message of salvation, and of the goodness of God; the same seed is sown in all our hearts, but our hearts are not all the same. I have got a stony

plot in my garden, and however much good seed I sow there, it won't grow. So it is with some of our hearts—they are not prepared, and the good seed falls as on a stone. Thus so many gospels, epistles, and sermons are heard, and nothing comes of them. “Some seed fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.”

Our first care, in learning the secret of happiness, should be to pray to God, the Heavenly Husbandman, to prepare our hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we may with meekness receive the engrafted word, and find the joy of that good part which no man taketh away from us.

Sometimes people tell us that their food does them no good—they eat and drink, yet they are not nourished, they waste away. Why is this? Because there is something wrong inside them, they can't digest their food. The food is good enough, but the mischief is in themselves.

Some people tell us that their religion does them no good, that they are not happy. Why is this? The fault is not in the religion, there is something wrong inside the people themselves, they cannot digest their spiritual food. They have lost a healthy taste for what is good and pure and holy; some sin is spoiling their taste for religion; they are like children whose appetite is clogged with unwholesome sweetmeats, so that they cannot enjoy honest food.

You know that if you sow good seed in your field or garden, but suffer the thorns and thistles to grow, the good seed will have no chance.

So it is with our lives—the good seed of God's Word cannot grow in our heart if we allow the thorns to choke it. And how abundant those thorns are! There is the thorn of *Pride*. A young girl or lad is reproved for doing wrong. Instead of expressing sorrow, the one who is in fault stiffens his neck, and takes to going to Chapel, or to idling about the highways and hedges, when others are going to Church. Religion cannot benefit such an one, there is the thorn of Pride choking the seed. Then there is the thorn of *Bad Temper*. Some people come to Church, and hear the message of Divine love, and the promises of the Gospel, and go home and straightway fly into a passion, and so the good is lost. When I was a little boy they set me this copy to write:—"To be good is to be happy." There lies the secret of happiness. The Christian life is a rejoicing life, a life of sunshine; where every cloud has a silver lining, and even sickness and death are crowned with beauty. To be happy means to have learned truly to love the Lord Jesus, to have given up our life to Him, to have taken Him by the Hand, saying, "Lord, undertake for me, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." He who has done this is happy, come what will. He is "a man of cheerful yesterdays, and confident to-morrows," one who finds blessings starting up around him, like primroses in the spring-time.

He takes sorrow as a wholesome medicine to purify his heart, and bring him nearer to his God, since "Some falls are means the happier to arise." He looks upon death as the gate of life eternal, since to him to live is Christ, to die is gain. I trust that many of you have learned this secret of a happy life, and are going on your way rejoicing, "marching to the Promised Land." You can say as you journey on—

"On our way rejoicing, as we homeward move,
Hearken to our praises, O Thou God of love.
Is there grief or sadness, Thine it cannot be,
Is our sky beclouded, clouds are not from Thee.
If with honest-hearted love for God and man,
Day by day thou find us doing what we can,
Thou who giv'st the seedtime wilt give large increase,
Crown the head with blessings, fill the heart with peace."

But some of us have not so learned Christ, their life, especially their religious life, is sad. They walk gloomily along life's pathway, finding "how full of briars is this work-a-day world," instead of stepping out with a quickened pace, as a happy man does, going on their way rejoicing. But what must we do to alter this? First, let us be sure that we are on the *right* way, if we are not happy, we are not Christ's people. If our way be not a rejoicing way, it is not the right way; we must quit it, and start again. Have you ever seen a child which has lost its way, wandering along crying, frightened, miserable? Well, when you have put that child into the right road,

all is changed. It recognises the familiar path, and the well-known objects by the roadside, and it goes on its way rejoicing. We who are not happy in our religion are the children who have lost their way. One of our Bishops was once asked jestingly in a railway carriage, which was the best way to Heaven. He answered promptly, "Take the first turning to the right, and keep straight on."

"The first turning to the right," that means *repentance*; turning out of the old path of sin, which has been a sad path. "Keep straight on," that means *perseverance*, continuing in the right road, praying always, "Hold Thou up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." If we are once on the right way we cannot help rejoicing, because we have so much to be thankful for. A Christian's life ought to be one long thanksgiving. The man who takes all the good things which God sends him, and never feels thankful, cannot expect to be happy. I have read of a man who was once telling his religious experiences at a public meeting; he dwelt upon his trials, his troubles, and the hardness of the road on which he had to travel. Presently another man spoke, and said, "I see our friend is living in Grumbling Street. I lived there myself once upon a time, and nothing prospered with me. I never had good health, the air was bad, the house was bad, the sun never seemed to shine there, and no birds ever sang in that street. I changed my residence. I moved into Thanksgiving Street, and now I have good health. The days are bright, the sun shines, the air is pure, and the

birds sing oftener than anywhere else. I advise our friend to change his quarters, there is plenty of room in Thanksgiving Street."

Believe me, the one great secret of happiness is to be thankful, "in everything give thanks." A woman who was too poor to cover her little boy with extra bedclothes to shelter him from the snow, which drifted through the broken wall, used to shelter him with boards. One night the little fellow asked, "Mother, what do the poor folks do, who have no boards to cover their children with these cold nights?" That little child was thankful, even for a bit of board!

But to be thankful we must be contented, that is another great secret of happiness. The poorest Christian has all that he needs, "as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." He has God for his Father, Jesus Christ for his Saviour, the Holy Spirit for his Guide. He has the Church as his nursing Mother, who washes him in the Waters of Baptism, and feeds him on the Holy Food of the Altar. He has Heaven for his home, the Saints and Angels for his companions, what more can he need?

My brethren, if you would be happy, learn to be contented with such things as you have. Learn to look up, and say, "thank God!" Learn to say,

" My crown is in my heart, not on my head,
My crown is called Content."

Finally, if you would go on your way rejoicing, you must love your brethren, and strive to help them along the road. Christians are not solitary travellers along life's path, but brethren going the same way, and bidden to see that they fall not out by the way. If you would be happy yourselves, try to make others so, "learn the luxury of doing good." Then you will be happy, in life, in death, in eternity. There is a beautiful story of a woman who had met with many trials and sorrows, yet was always cheerful and contented, as though she were always in the sunshine. When she was dying, a stream of golden sunlight streamed across her bed, and a butterfly lighted on her breast. As she breathed her last the beautiful insect flew upward into the sunshine. So passes away a Christian soul into the light of perfect day, and goes on its way rejoicing.

SERMON X.

THE PATIENT LIFE.

II. CORINTHIANS VI. 10.

"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."

I HAVE said that the Christian life is one of rejoicing ; yet it is one into which sorrow enters very largely. Long before Job said " Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward," it had become a truism. There have been sad hearts, and wet eyes, and weary limbs ever since sin came to Paradise, and brought sorrow with it. But the sorrows of Christ's people are different in their effect from all others. The tears of a patient Christian fall like summer rain, and soften the rough places of life ; whilst the tears of a godless, angry man fall like molten lead, burning

and scorching all around. When the flood came on the earth, the wicked, foolish world was destroyed ; but faithful Noah was borne up in the Ark, and the higher the flood rose, the higher Noah was lifted. So with us. The flood of trouble comes and destroys the godless and unbelieving—it drives them to suicide, or drink, or murder. But the Christian, safe in the Ark of the Church, is borne up by the flood, and the higher it rises, the nearer he is lifted to Heaven. The sorrows of this world lead Christ's people to think more of the joys of the world to come. The sight of death carries their thoughts to the life beyond. The sharp piercing of a pain takes them closer to Jesus, since, as it has been said, "The face of Jesus must be very near our own when the thorns from His Crown of Sorrows are pressing our brow, and hurting us." To the godless, sorrow is an unmixed evil, bitter and nauseous ; to the Christian it is bitter also, but it is the bitterness of the healing drug, not of the deadly poison. It is the Christian who has found out that "sweet are the uses of adversity." Covetous Ahab, with all that man can desire, is miserable because he has not Naboth's Vineyard ; haughty Haman is distressed because Mordecai has not done him honour ; whilst holy Paul can sing, with his feet made fast in the stocks, and dying Stephen among the cruel stones, has, as it were, the face of an angel. When a boy is sent to school, he finds it very different from home life. There are not the same comforts, or enjoyments. It is a place of discipline, of work, of self-denial,

of trials and sharp punishments, which are all for the boy's good, that he may learn to take his place in the world. We, too, are sent to school. This life is our school-time, Christ is our Master, and the discipline, the sorrows, the trials of life, are teachers to prepare us for the great after-time, the life everlasting. If there were no thorns to pierce, no loss to bear, no Gethsemane to weep in, no grave to open, men would never think about Heaven.

It is when we have had to shed many tears that we learn to long for that place where God shall wipe all tears from off all faces. The best telescope to bring Heaven near to our sight is a tearful eye. It is when we see the grave close over one very dear to us, that we begin to think of its opening again on the Resurrection Morning. I believe a man only begins to pray after he has known trouble.

A prosperous person, who has never felt the sting of sorrow, says his prayers for years, but never feels them; he prays just as some play an instrument of music, correctly enough, but without a shadow of feeling. But when trouble comes, when the husband is brought home one day, crushed and maimed, what was a strong man an hour ago, a poor broken mass of agony now—then the wife cries out in prayer, with all her heart and soul in it. When some malignant disease enters the house, and the merry prattle of the nursery ceases, and one little bed after another is left without a tenant, then the parents learn to pray. It

is when some terrible trouble is tugging at our heart-strings that we get near to God. If we were permitted always to walk along the " primrose path " of life, we should never look up, nor remember that the Hand which leads us was once nailed to a Cross.

You all remember the story of Jonah and his gourd. How God prepared a plant which gave a grateful shade to the prophet, and he sat beneath it, and was exceeding glad of his gourd. But God prepared a worm which smote the gourd, and it withered away. So it is with us. Most of our earthly pleasures and delights are like Jonah's gourd. We sit under the shadow thereof, and are exceeding glad ; then comes the worm of trouble, and lo ! our plant of delight is withered away. One is sitting under the pleasant shade of commercial prosperity, and is exceeding glad of his wealth. Suddenly a commercial panic arises, the bank is shut, the mine is flooded, the speculation fails ; the worm of ruin has smitten the goodly plant of prosperity. Now the once prosperous man sees his pleasant things vanish away ; the furniture is seized for debt, the home relics are desecrated, the household gods scattered, the child's toys, the wife's ornaments, are carried off by strangers. Then if that man has ever known God, he turns to the words which have a new meaning for him now—" Lay up for yourselves treasure in Heaven. Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord."

Another is sitting under the shadow of home joys. He is p'anning for the future. This bright-haired child will grow up to be a great man one day, he must do grand things in the world. Suddenly all is changed. The worm has begun his work. The little feet, which ran so fast to meet us every morning, are heavy now. The bright head tosses uneasily on the hot pillow. There lies the toy in the garden with which he played but yesterday. There hangs his useless hat upon the wall. Some of you, dear friends, have known the sorrow of bereavement. Some of you who are waxing old know what it is to open the old Bible, and read the record of your children's birth and death, and as you read, the faces which have gone from you this many a day seem to return again. Some of you can say,—

“Sitting to-night in my old arm-chair,
With my Bible on my knee,
I read from its record-page of birth
The names of children three.
And written beneath, in the same strong hand,
While the heart was breaking with pain,
'The Lord has given, and taken away,
But blessed be His Name.'

With two the record of life was short,
Like a summer's day of joy,
I can see them now with these dim old eyes,
My little girl and boy.
And I think of them when I read the words
In an old, old Book, which saith
'They were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And divided not in death.'”

And these bereavements come to us as teachers. When the family circle is broken up, our thoughts should fly to that family above, where death and parting come not ; where the lambs which left our home-fold so early are in the arms of the Good Shepherd.

Some of you may remember a picture called “The Vacant Chair.” It was published immediately after the death of Charles Dickens, and represents the empty chair where he sat and wrote in his pleasant Kentish home, filling the world with innocent mirth and happiness. There are vacant chairs in every household.

“ There is no fold, however watched and tended,
 But one dead lamb is there ;
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
 But hath one vacant chair.”

And these empty chairs are pulpits, from which God preaches to us by the voices of those who, being dead, yet speak. The dead father or mother, the old patriarch, or little child, whose vacant chair is with us, these speak to us ; and though there be neither speech nor language, yet their voices are heard among us. They tell us not to set our affections on things on the earth, for here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come, a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. Perhaps one of the greatest sorrows in life is bad health. No trial is more severe than never to feel quite well ; especially in the case of the active and energetic. To have the wish to be up, and doing a good day’s work for

God and man, and not to have the power; to lie day after day, and watch sunrise, and sunset, through the window ; to see the free birds darting across the sky, and to feel oneself a prisoner ; to look at others enjoying their food, whilst we turn away from it with disgust ; to see strong, healthy limbs around us, and to compare them with our own ; to hear the hearty laugh, and to feel that we are almost too weak to smile,—all this is very hard to bear, and yet illness is one of God's best teachers. If you would learn a lesson, if you would have some of the light from Heaven upon your life, go and visit a Christian's sick bed. I knew a little maid once, she is lying in our churchyard now, who, when dying of heart disease, used to sing hymns to me, her eyes full of happiness, whilst mine were full of tears. I have seen people, *poor* people without money to purchase extra comforts, lying in hospital wards, suffering all kinds of agonies, with faces as happy as those of angels. Why was it? Because God was with them, the great teacher Sorrow, had led them to the feet of Jesus, and their wounds had found comfort from His Wounds. They could look beyond the bed of pain, beyond the dull walls of the hospital ward, to that home where "there shall be no more pain." Dear brethren and sisters, we must all know sorrow ; and as Christian people especially we shall be tried, that, like our Master Christ, we may be "made perfect through sufferings." There is a legend, which I may have told you before, describing how the Crown of Thorns, preserved in a cer-

tain Church abroad, always blossoms on Easter Day. If we sorrow after a godly sort, we shall find our crown of trouble blooming into the rose of sweet resignation. We shall be able "to nurse the caged sorrow till the captive sings," and to go on our way rejoicing, even in times of trouble, "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."

SERMON XI.

THE TEMPTED LIFE.

S. JAMES I. 12.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation."

THERE was a very remarkable picture in the Royal Academy of last year, called "Diana, or Christ?" It represents a young Christian woman ordered to sacrifice to Diana. There sits the grim priest before the statue of the Goddess. There burns the fire into which the maiden is bidden to cast incense. Close at hand is the Roman Governor, watching to see if she will obey. Hard by is a youth, the maiden's lover, looking at her with beseeching eyes, as though he said, "Do it for my sake. It is only to burn a little pinch of incense, and all will be well. If

you refuse, you will be thrown to the wild beasts, your tender limbs will be mangled by the lions, and we shall never meet again!"

A terrible temptation truly. She has only to burn a little incense, and all will be well; she will be free and safe, and in the care of her lover. It is only to burn a little pinch of incense, but if she does so, she dishonours Jesus, and forsakes her religion. Now all through our lives we, as Christian people, are being tempted by the devil, in one way or another, to forsake our Master, Jesus, and to sacrifice to some sin, some bad passion, which dishonours Christ, and unfits us to bear the name of Christian. The Christian's life is a *tempted life*. Over and over again comes the whisper of the tempter, urging us to do or say something which we know to be wrong, contrary to the principles of our faith. From childhood to old age the whisper comes. There is one kind of temptation for the child, another for the grown man, one for the rich, another for the poor. And the tempter always represents the sin as a trifle, "is it not a little one," says the whisper, "it is only a little pinch of incense." This is Satan's favourite plan. He never shows us a sin full-sized, and in its true colours, we should then shrink back from it in horror, it is always as a trifle that we look at it, we see the bait, but not the hook which it covers. The child at school hears the whisper of the tempter. He is tempted to take some small thing from a school-fellow's desk. "But that would be stealing," thinks the tempted child.

Then comes the whisper, “ It is only a little one, a trifle like this does not matter, it is only a little pinch of incense.” Yes, but it means a sacrifice to the devil. Or the child is tempted to do some mean and dishonourable action, to lie, or copy from a neighbour in an examination, and the whisper comes “ You will never be found out, it is only a trifle.” Yes, these sins are very easy to commit, nothing is simpler. If you have ever watched foolish people at a gambling table, you will have seen how easy it is to lose money. They put their money on a certain card, the card is turned, and their money is gone. Nothing can be simpler. So it is with falling into temptation, it is done in a moment : some of the worst sins are the most quickly committed. The down-hill road is an easy one to travel on, but to retrace our steps, to regain our lost position, there lies the difficulty.

The child at school grows up anon into the young man or woman working for his bread, at home, or in the world. Now the voice of the tempter is heard plainer than ever. That whisper comes from many voices. The devil has many agents, male and female, busy with the life of youth, and his work is now chiefly done by bad company. Perhaps you have known what it is to take a basket of ripe apples, and put them away carefully for keeping. And after a few days you have found what was good honest fruit a mass of corruption. Why was it so ? Because there was one decayed apple among them which has spoilt all. So have I seen many promising lives wrecked, and young

men and women ruined through the evil influence of one companion—"a goodly apple, rotten at the heart."

In the place of business, be it shop, or warehouse, or office, or where not, the devil's agents are busy, doing the devil's own work of temptation. In the shop, the young man sees short measure given, and false weights used, and inferior goods sold at the best price. And when he shrinks from this knavery, he is told that it is the way of the world, and the custom in that business, and that he must not be too particular if he wishes to get on. It is only a trifle, they tell him ; it is the little pinch of incense, but it means forsaking Christ, and sacrificing to Satan. When Sunday comes, the young man or woman prepares to go to Church as of old. He is met by companions, who laugh at the idea, who tell him that Church-going is dull work, and that religion makes men melancholy. Sunday is a day of rest and amusement, let it be enjoyed. And so for the first time the noisy excursion party takes the place of the worship in God's Temple. It is only a trifle, thinks the tempted one, but it is the beginning of the end ; it is the little pinch of incense burnt to the false god. As for the young Christian of old the question was, "Diana or Christ?" so for the tempted now the question is, "Whom shall I choose, Satan or Jesus?" One night perhaps the young man is discovered reading his Bible, as he had ever done at home. There is the devil's agent, in the form of some companion, ready to assure him that the days of the Bible are over. That

really clever men of science have discovered it to be full of mistakes. Then if the youth is weak, he puts the Bible away, ashamed of doing what he knows to be right, and so there is another bit of incense burnt on Satan's altar. Or a young woman goes into domestic service. At home she has always been accustomed to pray by her bedside night and morning. Now other servants share her room. They laugh at her when she kneels down, they call her "a saint," and she is actually ashamed of the name which we all ought to bear ; and if she is weak she forsakes her prayers, or puts out the light before doing what she knows is right. Again in her case, it is the old question, "Whom shall I choose, Christ or Satan?"

Again, in the amusements of life, the whisper of the tempter is often heard. Never suppose for a moment that it is wrong to be happy and cheerful, or that it is a sin to take recreation after work. Amusement is a necessity, it is a law of God. The danger and the sin lie in using the wrong kind of amusement, or putting the right kind to a wrong use. Just as one plant growing in a hedge is good for food, and the one growing next to it is a poison, so is it with amusements. An innocent song does us good, it elevates us, purifies us, whilst an immodest song, or even an utterly foolish song, or one full of thinly-veiled indecency, is just so much poison. I wish our average young men and women of to-day had a sufficiently healthy appetite to turn with disgust from the songs so common in their places of amusement, songs,

many of them, which are the words of the tempter set to indifferent music. Some of you remember how the brave old Indian Colonel, in one of Thackeray's noble stories, took his young son to a famous place, where as a boy he had enjoyed good singing. After an absence of many years he found the place changed, and presently a song was sung, which brought a blush to the boy's cheek. Then the old soldier rose, and taking his son's arm, stalked grim and threatening down the room, leaving the singer and his audience alike ashamed of themselves. I have heard lately of a young clergyman who found that the young men of his Bible class frequented a club of their own, where these foolish and often vicious songs were sung. One night he went to the place, and sat unobserved in the corner for a while. Suddenly he sprang up on the platform, and, throwing aside his cloak, said, "I've listened to one of your songs, now listen to one of mine." Then he sang a bright, pure, fresh ballad, in a clear, ringing voice, which was received with loud applause. Before he left that night, he had persuaded the majority to substitute good songs for the vicious and senseless productions to which they had previously listened.

Again, in this age of cheap books, the devil is very busy with the printing press. If I see a young man or woman eagerly reading a bad book or paper, and there is abundance of such penny poison sold, I feel disposed to ask, "Understandest thou what thou readest?"

The fast clerk, the silly shop-girl, the flighty servant, may safely date the beginning of their fall from the time when they acquired an unwholesome taste for this kind of reading.

In all these, and a thousand other ways, the devil is tempting us to dishonour the name of Christian, and to sacrifice to him. How, then, ought we to meet temptation? Let S. Augustine tell us—he says, “If tempted to sin, if you wish to conquer, take to flight.” Joseph in Egypt escaped a terrible sin by running away from his temptation, and there is no disgrace in such flight. But we cannot always escape from the bad company, or the evil talk; a temptation may meet us like a lion standing in a narrow path, and there is no turning back. What must we do then? We must fight, praying for courage to Jesus, who knows our temptation. The once tempted Jesus will never forsake his tempted servant. But we must be in earnest about the matter. Many persons, when turning away from some temptation, some bad thought, some impure sight, some evil companionship, look back longingly, like Lot’s wife, and are lost. They know that the temptation is from the devil, they know it is full of abomination like Sodom, yet they look back to it.

When at the battle of Balaclava, the order came for the Light Brigade to charge, all knew that a mistake had been made, and that the command meant the destruction of many valiant men. What then? Did any hesitate?

No, each man said to himself, "I've got my orders," and so, "Into the valley of death rode the Six Hundred." However hard our battle with temptation may be, and when our spiritual enemies thrust sore at us that we may fall, we must each of us try to remember, "I've got my orders?" I read once of a boy, who was tempted by his friends to go to a gambling place. He resisted them, saying always, "I've got my orders," and when asked what he meant, he answered, "Enter not in to the paths of the wicked, and go not in to the way of evil men—My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

The Bible is the Christian soldier's order book, and we have all got our orders. Once when Nelson was in a battle, the admiral in command was afraid of defeat, and made the signal for the ships to retire. When told of this, Nelson put his telescope to his blind eye, and declaring that he saw no signal, fought on, and won a victory. Too often when we should see the signal to fight on, we look at it with blinded eyes, and retire beaten from the contest. We all need to pray for courage to do right, to stand to our colours in all company, and when tempted to do evil, to say that hardest of words sometimes,—“No! I've got my orders.”

But there is another, and a very different sense in which the Christian life is a tempted life. If you had a bottle of medicine given you, and you were doubtful whether it were good medicine, or deadly poison, you would take it

to a skilful chemist, who would test it. There is a test for each kind of poison, and under its proper test arsenic, or strychnine, or any other poison shows itself. So God tests, or tries His people, to prove whether they are truly His, or only false brethren, who have the poison of asps under their lips. As the deadly drug shows itself under the test, so does the good and evil character of the professing Christian come out under God's trial.

At certain seasons the authorities at the mint go through a certain ceremony, which is to ascertain if the coin issued is true and genuine. So does God try us, to prove whether we be sterling metal, bearing His image and superscription, or base metal of the devil's coining. We have all read how they try the great guns before they use them in the Queen's service. So God tries us, to prove whether we are fit for the service of Christ's Church militant here on earth. As the brightest jewels have to be cut and ground, and some tried in a fierce fire, so the brightest gems, on the day when God makes up His jewels, will be those people who have suffered, and passed through the fire of affliction, of whom it can be said, "blessed is the man that endureth temptation."

When we see really good people afflicted, and tried beyond measure ; loving hearts disappointed of their darling wishes, hopes destined never to be realised, we are sometimes foolish enough to think, "where is the use of being

good, hath God forgotten to be gracious?" When we see men labouring for others' good, and getting no reward, when we see Prometheus, in the old fable, bringing light and knowledge to men, and in return chained to a mountain, with a vulture preying on his vitals; or Socrates teaching almost divine philosophy, and repaid by a cup of poison in a prison cell; or Columbus left almost to starve by the country which he had spent a lifetime to enrich, we are tempted to ask, "to what purpose was this waste? This waste of power, and time, and energy?" Ah! friends, it is not waste. No good, earnest work, which makes us deny ourselves, and leads us humbly to imitate the Perfect Life of Jesus, is waste. As says a modern writer, speaking of the fruit of trial and of sorrow, "I tell you the deeper the furrows are scored, the heavier shall be the harvest, the richer the garnered grain. I tell you, not a tear falls but it fertilizes some barren spot, from which hereafter shall come up the fresh verdure of an eternal spring in that region."

"Where there's fruit in the Gardens of Heaven
From the hope that on earth was betrayed;
Where there's rest for the soul, life-wearyed,
That hath striven, and suffered, and prayed.'

SERMON XII.

THE PERSEVERING LIFE.

S. MATTHEW X. 22.

“He that endureth to the end shall be saved.”

ANYONE who has watched a race, be it a foot-race, boat-race, or what not, must have noticed that “the race is not always to the swift.” It is not the fiery, headlong running in the course, nor the rapid, hurried stroke in the boat, which mean victory. The man who has what is called *staying power*, who “endureth to the end,” wins. The proverb says, “All things happen to him who waits,” and this is specially true of a long race. Over a short course a swift runner may win, but in a long course the winner is he who can hold out to the end. This is what S. Paul

meant when he said, "Let us run with *patience* the race that is set before us." Doubtless he had seen the Isthmian games which were held at Corinth every two years, games in which races formed a prominent part. There he would have looked on a course marked out, and crowds of spectators watching the scene, these forming "the great cloud of witnesses," of which the Apostle writes. He would have seen a herald calling on the runners to enter for the race, and afterwards announcing the victors. He would have seen, also, some pale, eager-eyed men, clad in loose garments, which were presently cast away as they began the race; and these reminded S. Paul that we must "cast aside every weight," and "the sin that doth so easily beset us." Presently the race begins, one bounds off ahead of the others, and leads, amid the shouts of the spectators. Others follow more steadily along the course, and by and by the first runner grows faint, and begins to flag, the steady follower passes him, and gains the goal and the prize, a crown of ivy, or pine leaves, or parsley. Such was the scene of which S. Paul was thinking when he wrote, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." He teaches us that if men do so much for a crown of parsley, which to-day is, and tomorrow is cast away; if to win this, men are temperate in all things, and keep under their body, how much more should we do for the sake of the crown eternal in the

Heavens, which fadeth not away—"our beautiful crown." There are several points of resemblance between the races of the old Greeks, and our race, the Christian life. First, none but pure-bred Greeks might enter the race. So we must be born again of water and of the Spirit in Holy Baptism before we can enter on the Christian life. Next, certain moral and political offences disqualified the Greek for the contest. So we must guard against the sins and weaknesses which hinder us in running the race set before us. The Greeks had to go into training for ten months and during that time they might eat and drink only such things as their training permitted. Our training-time is lifelong, and we must learn to deny ourselves, to give up such pursuits and pleasures as unfit us for living as Christian people; we must learn patiently to bear the crosses, the sorrows, the bereavements of life as part of our training.

Next, a certain course was marked out for the race. So with us. We must strive to keep in the narrow path of duty, and to run the way of God's commandments. In those races of old time the runner fixed his eyes on the judge, who held the crown of victory; we are bidden to run "looking unto Jesus," who says to us "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Those Greeks of old strove for a crown of parsley—"they did it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." But not all of us, brethren. We all have set some object before us, some prize for which we strive, but

not all of us can say with truth, “ Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God ; I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” One has set wealth before him as his prize. For this he strives, and sacrifices time, and health and strength, and becomes old before his time. And all for what? One day he dies, and his riches are nothing unto him, and over his grave may be written the epitaph which does exist somewhere, —“ What I spent, I had ; what I saved, I lost ; what I gave, I have.” Yes, that is true of all of us when we have gone hence. What we have spent on ourselves, on our pleasures and amusements, we had once, but now it is only a memory of the past. What we saved, the money invested in stocks and shares and securities, is lost to us when we enter the undiscovered country. What remains of us then after this life? What we gave, we have. Yes, that brings in the true interest. What we gave for the love of Jesus, the time, the work, the money, the sympathy, these things remain to us. Every kind word spoken to the sorrowful, every gentle act of charity, these remain to us, and yield interest an hundredfold. It has been well said that the gold and silver which we had on earth we leave there, and perhaps there was not enough to make a plate for our coffin lid, but the gold we gave is still in our possession, and has been beaten into a crown for us in Heaven. Another sets fame before him as the prize in the race, and strives only for that. And often when the crown is almost in his grasp, he falls in the race

worn out, as did a fellow-student of mine years ago, who overworked himself reading for a scholarship for which we were both candidates, and died of brain-fever one Christmas morning.

Ah ! my friends, what is this but racing for the parsley crown ? You gain it, and to-morrow it is withered and worthless. But those of you who are running the race "looking unto Jesus," must remember that perseverance, not enthusiasm, is necessary to ensure victory. The Christian life is emphatically a *waiting race*, a race run with patience, "he that endureth to the end shall be saved." I have known some who started well, who dashed off on life's course full of fire and courage, and determination, with their mother's prayers fresh in their memory, eager to win the prize. And I have looked for them later on in the race, to see if they were still pressing forward for the prize. Alas ! No. They started well, but they had no *staying powers*. They had given up the pursuit of holiness, and entered for some less worthy race, and the world says of them that "they have gone wrong," and we see them no more. We read in the Gospel that after Our Lord had said "I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven, if any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever. From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him." Ah ! brethren, how many there are in every parish who once were Christ's disciples, and who have gone back ! They started fairly enough in the race, but they have gone back, and walk

no more with Jesus. Where are some in this place who used to kneel at this Altar and receive Jesus, the living Bread from Heaven? Where are those who once loved their Church, and who have forsaken their first love? They have gone back, away from Jesus. These are the seed on the stony ground which came up quickly, and as quickly withered away. Weary of well-doing, they have left the race, and forfeited their crown, since "no man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." I pray for these; do you also pray for those who have gone back. They need the prayers of the faithful. You who are trying to run the race set before you, remember that in patience lies your strength, in perseverance you will find the way to victory. Strive day by day to get nearer to Jesus, farther from self, and move forward in the race. And do this with patience, not despairing because you often slip, and stumble, and make mistakes, "the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." It will not do for us to be good one week, and bad the next, to be all for God to-day, and all for self to-morrow. Every day must be one of advance, of reaching forward, of prayer, of struggle; every day our prayer should be, "Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee." And in this race remember we must cast aside every weight. Too many of us are overweighted, cumbered with much serving of this world, loaded with cares and anxieties, carrying burdens of our own choosing, too heavy for us to bear.

If we would win the race, we must cast aside every weight. Let me tell you of two men who thus laid aside the weight. Once a gold digger was coming home in a steamer which caught fire. The vessel was near the shore, and the man, who carried all his fortune in a digger's belt, calculated that he could just swim to land with this precious load upon him. Just as he was preparing to spring from the burning ship, something touched his hand. He looked down, and saw a little blue-eyed girl, who said "Please, sir, won't you save me?" If he took the child he must sacrifice his gold, all he had in the world, the fruit of much hard labour. For a moment there was a terrible struggle in the man's breast, the struggle between self and duty; his better nature prevailed, he cast away his precious belt, and taking the child in his arms swam safely ashore. He lost his gold, but verily he had his reward. When S. Vincent de Paule was doing the noble work which has made his name of a sweet savour in the Church, he tried to soften a galley slave, a hardened criminal sentenced to perpetual imprisonment in the galleys. The man, who was chained like a wild beast, was as fierce and dangerous as one, and refused all the good priest's ministrations. Then S. Vincent de Paule caused himself to be chained to this savage criminal, that he might be more able to sympathise with what he felt, and at length this marvellous act of self-sacrifice was rewarded by the repentance and rescue of the slave. There is an old story of the Greeks which tells us of Atalanta, the

swiftest runner among mortals. No one might hope to win her as a wife unless he could outrun her in the race. Many attempted the task, and paid for failure with their lives. At last one suitor came, who had brought with him three golden apples. These he dropped, one by one, during the course, and Atalanta, stooping to pick up the tempting fruit, lost the race. My brothers, many a one on the race of life stops to pick up some golden apple, some pleasure, some profit, some darling sin, and so loses his crown. Remember this, "They that run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run that ye may obtain."

SERMON XIII.

THE PRAISING LIFE.

I COR. X. 31.

"Do all to the glory of God."

THE praises of God should not be kept only for Sunday. Some people seem to fancy that the duty and privilege of giving glory to God begin on Sunday morning, and end on Sunday night. But it is not so. A Christian's whole life should be a life of praise. Every day sees all nature singing its *Te Deum*, and shall we alone keep silence? "The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy work." The sun rejoicing as a giant to run his course, the moon ruling the night, the birds and feathered fowls, the cattle upon a thousand hills,—

"The floods and ocean billows,
The storm and winter snow,
The days of cloudless beauty,
Hoar frost and summer glow,
The groves that wave in spring
And glorious forests sing—Alleluia."

We cannot look on the world of nature at any season of the year, without learning the truth of the words—"all Thy works praise Thee, O God." Spring, with its new life, its opening buds, its growing crops, its flower-spangled meadows, has numberless voices which seem to sing, "We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord ; all the earth doth worship Thee, the Father everlasting." Summer, with its treasures of beauty and blossom, Autumn with its happy harvest fields, where the meadows stand so thick with corn that they laugh and sing, utter the same glad song. Winter, with its wild storms, when the bare bending trees seem clapping their hands together—joins in a deep-voiced anthem, and the mighty roar of the ocean comes in "like the sound of a great Amen." Yes, "earth with ten thousand voices praises God." And have we not abundant cause to praise God, as we look back, and recal the days that are gone? I care not how rough and toilsome our path of life may have been, I know there are many blessings strewn there. Let the saddest and most afflicted among us look back, and let him see if he can say truly that he has not much to thank God for. We may have forgotten God's mercies perhaps, the blessings spiritual and temporal, the Hand

which hath holden us up ever since we were born, the Hand which hath led us like a flock ; the strength sufficient for the day when the sharp temptation came ; the grace of pardon given after repentance, the morn of joy coming after the night of sorrow, the sunshine returning after the rain ; the flowers of comfort appearing on the earth after bereavement's bitter frost, the gentle tempering of the wind to the shorn lamb,—all these things we may have forgotten, we do forget God's mercies only too often. Yet God hath not forgotten to be gracious. Look back, even while I speak, into your past lives, and learn to feel like one who says :—

“ Backward my memory wanders to-night,
Into the shadows of bygone years,
Parting the curtains, and bringing to light
The past, with its burden of gladness and tears

Things long forgotten, memories hushed,
Dreams I had tenderly buried from sight,
Longings unsatisfied,—bright hopes crushed,
Of sunshine and gladness, of shadow and blight ;

Of a sister's tears, and a mother's prayers,
Of trials, temptations, and victories won,
Of days of brightness, and freedom from cares,
Or of striving to utter—‘ Thy will be done.’

And I marvel much at the tangled skein,
The parted curtains have left in sight ;
With threads of gladness, and threads of pain,
All mingled and twisted, the dark with the light.

But a skilful Weaver is watching the loom,
And although the web may seem jagged and rough,
Whether threads of glory, or threads of gloom,
He knoweth the reason, and that is enough."

Yes, my brothers, all our lives are woven of a different pattern, but in all we can trace the golden thread of God's mercy, of Christ's redeeming love. At times our life seems a vast mystery, a dark riddle ; we see the righteous perish, and no man taking it to heart ; whilst the wicked flourish, and have even what they lust. We see our own fondest hopes disappointed, our labour seems as fruitless as those of one of whom the old fables tell us, one ever condemned to roll a vast stone uphill, which rolled back faster than it was thrust forward. And then at these times we are tempted to despair, and to grow weary of well-doing. It is because we have forgotten God's goodness to us, we have neglected to thank Him. Oh ! when the complex machinery of our life works differently from what we desire, let us learn to say,

" Thy pierc'd Hand guides the mysterious wheels ;
Thy thorn-crowned brow now wears the crown of power ;
And when the dark enigma presseth sore,
Thy patient Voice saith, ' Watch with me one hour.'
As sinks the moaning river in the sea
In silver peace, so sinks my soul in Thee."

When we remember how little we have deserved God's goodness, how little we have done for Him who doeth all for us; surely our lips must break forth into praise,

and must say with holy David, “Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise His holy name; praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thine infirmities. Who saveth thy soul from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and lovingkindness. Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, making thee young and lusty as an eagle.”

Yea, of a truth, He forgiveth all our sins, having died on the Cross for the sins of all men, and by His stripes we are healed. Yea, of a truth, He healeth all our infirmities, making the blind to see the wondrous things of His law, making the deaf to hear the message of salvation, and the lame to walk in the right way. He liftest up us feeble folk out of the mire and clay of besetting sins, and setteth us on a rock, and ordereth our goings in the way. Yea, of a truth, He saveth our life from destruction, since He hath redeemed us from the power of sin and death. Now may we say to Satan, “Why boastest thou thyself, thou tyrant, that thou canst do mischief, whereas the goodness of God endureth yet daily? O, thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end.” We have in Holy Baptism been washed in the Blood of Jesus, and having left the death of sin, we have entered on the life of righteousness. And, of a truth, He hath crowned us with mercy and lovingkindness. He hath set a crown of pure gold, even the gold of His love, upon our head, and for us “the fear of the Lord is honour,

and glory, and gladness, and a crown of rejoicing. And, above all, He hath satisfied our mouth with good things. He hath fed us with the food of His Gospel, the milk and honey of His Word, "Yea, sweeter than honey and an honey-comb." He hath fed us with the holy service of His Church, by glad Festival and solemn Fast; Advent leading us to the joys of Christmas, Lent preparing us for the blessedness of Easter, the Great Forty Days teaching us to look for the coming of the Holy Ghost. And better still, He hath fed us with more than Angels' food, with the finest of wheat, even the Heavenly Bread which cometh from that Corn of Wheat which fell into the ground; yea, with honey out of the Rock, the Rock of Ages cleft on Calvary, hath He satisfied us, saying, "take, eat, this is My Body." And in the strength of that Food we shall go on from strength to strength, till everyone of us appeareth before the Lord in Sion, with features renewed by the Resurrection, and our vile bodies made like unto His glorious Body.

For all these things we owe praises and thanksgivings to our God. We owe Him for "our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, but above all, for His inestimable love in the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory." Yes, we owe God for our own *creation*, and for the Heavens and the earth, which are the work of His fingers. We all have a property in the blue sky, and the green fields, and the bright flowers. The spring

brings the May bloom for the poorest as well as for the Prince. The wide sea is as glorious for the beggar as for the rich man. And the man whose eyes are open to see the beauties of nature, can look at better pictures than ever hung in earthly galleries. We owe God also for our *preservation*. Death is always close at hand, there are perils by land, and perils by water, the prick of a needle, or the wind blowing through a chink, or a false step, may lay us low in death. Yet we are safe and well to-day, because God has preserved us. But above all, we owe God for our redemption. We who grudge a few minutes or hours given to Jesus, owe Him for a lifetime. We who love the world's roses too well, owe Him for the thorns. We who care too much for ease and comfort, owe Him for a homeless life, a manger cradle, a bitter Cross. And in return for that debt of love and kindness we can give praise and thanksgiving. "Whoso offereth Me thanks and praise, he honoureth Me. O that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness, and declare the wonders that He doeth for the children of men." But I would not have you praise God only in Church. That is indeed the House of Praise, and there we should glorify God with heart and soul, and voice, especially at the highest service of praise, the Celebration of the Blessed Sacrament. But I would have you learn to praise God not only with your lips, but in your lives, making your life one long hymn of praise. To do this you must make it a *contented life*. Murmuring lips can shape no praises.

There is the legend among the Jewish Rabbis, that one day the prophet Elijah appeared suddenly in the crowded market-place of a great city. There were met the Chief Priests and rulers of the Jews, great and clever men, poor and unlearned folk, and labouring people. The Chief Priests asked the prophet who among that crowd would be saved. Elijah pointed to two mechanics who were crossing the market-place, talking and laughing merrily together. The Rulers in surprise asked what great thing these men had done. No great thing, but they were contented with such things as they had, they worked honestly and cheerfully at their trade, they thanked God for His mercies, and never spoke evil of their neighbours. So the man or woman who takes what God sends, be it sunshine or shower, and can look up and say truly, "thank God," who works cheerily without grumbling, "as unto the Lord, and not unto men," such an one praises God. If men would understand this, they would not look on their work as a curse, but a blessing. The reason why it is so hard to get working-men to church is because they have never learned to praise God in their work, and so they do not care to praise Him in His Holy Temple. And next, we praise God by helping to make others happy, and by leading them to Jesus. I believe that the sight of a mother teaching her little one to pray, or that of a gentle friend soothing the sorrows of an invalid, or leading a wrong-doer to a better mind, are precious in God's eyes above

all the great works of the greatest men of all time. These things, like Mary's ointment, are remembered for ever. The sacrifice of love is the best praise offered to the All-loving God. It was said by one of old that life consisted of two heaps; a large one of sorrow, a small one of happiness. And whoever carried a little atom from one to the other, did God service. To make others happy, especially to make them good, is an offering of a sweet-smelling savour to the Lord.

" Let us gather up the sunbeams
Lying all around our path;
Let us keep the wheat and roses,
Casting out the thorns and chaff,
Let us find our sweetest comfort
In the blessings of to-day,
With a patient hand removing
All the briars from the way.

Let us scatter seeds of kindness,
For our reaping by-and-bye."

They tell us that they can trace in the sandstone the marks of a raindrop which fell a million years ago. So the smallest act of love done for God shall leave its mark, if not seen here in time, it will be visible in eternity. "Dwell in the land and be doing good, and verily thou shalt be fed." Praise God in all you do, great things or small, and remember the words of a great preacher-poet of our day, who bade one—

" Be good, and let who will be clever,
Do whole things, not dream them all day long,
And so make life, death, and that vast for ever
One grand, sweet song."

SERMON XIV.

THE PRAYING LIFE.

EPHES. VI. 18.

"Praying always."

EVERY warrior is proud of the sword with which he won his victories. History tells us many things of these triumphant weapons. The Bible speaks of the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon, which struck terror to the hearts of Midian. Legends tell us of the mystic sword of Arthur—"the blameless king," the sword Excalibur, before which the heathen Northmen trembled and fell back on the shores of "wild Dundagil, by the Cornish Sea." And old soldiers of to-day will shew with pride the blade all hacked and worn, which cut a path through the enemy's ranks in

days gone by. I speak to-day of a weapon more power-than these, one which defeats all foes, triumphs over all obstacles, and wins a way into every fortress. Some of those swords of old were so heavy that only a man of vast strength could wield them, but the little child, the weak invalid, the tender woman, can wield the weapon of which I speak, and with it they must conquer. It will rob sorrow of its sting, and bereavement of its bitterness ; it will strike off the chains of despair, and set the captive free ; by it death is robbed of its victory, and that last enemy becomes a friend. Before it the fiery darts of Satan fall quenched and harmless. And this weapon is *Prayer*, the best sword in the Christian's armoury. Armed with that weapon, the weakest among us shall wax strong, strong in our very weakness, to be more than conquerors through Him who says, " My grace is sufficient for thee."

Hold fast to prayer, my brethren, and you shall feel that "underneath are the everlasting arms ;" and amid the bitter strife with temptation, above the raging of the tempest of sorrow, above the earthquake, and the whirlwind, and the fire, you shall hear the still, small voice, saying, "Fear not, for I am with thee."

I stood lately in S. Paul's Cathedral, and saw many monuments raised to English heroes, on which were written a list of their victories. But what monument could hold the list of triumphs won by prayer ; triumphs

gained in drawing-room and garret, in palace and hovel, in prison-cell and workhouse ward, in noisy barracks and tossing ships, or hospital couches wet with tears of agony, by empty cradles, and by new made graves ? These are the victories won on battle-fields of sorrow, of trial, of loss, of temptation, where the fighting was harder than at Marathon, or Austerlitz, or Waterloo ; victories of faith, victories won by prayer. The history of the Church of Christ is the history of these triumphs.

I look on one such scene of history. Fierce, angry men are surging round a kneeling figure. The cruel stones fly fast, the clasped hands are bruised and bloody, and the gentle eyes turned up to Heaven are dim with blood, not tears. Yet those eyes can see what the fierce mob cannot see. “Behold,” he murmurs, “I see Heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.” Faster fly the cruel stones. Again that gentle voice is heard, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Lord, lay not this sin to their charge ;” and so he falls asleep, Stephen, the conqueror by prayer.

I look on another scene. An old, white-haired man, is waiting for death in his prison cell. Years ago he looked on the dying Stephen unmoved, now he has learnt to call himself the chief of sinners. Since those days he has fought a good fight, and kept the faith, he knows his weapon. It is he who wrote to the Ephesian Church—“praying always.” To-day is his day of victory. The

prison doors swing open, the grim executioner enters, and Paul the aged speaks, "I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure draweth nigh; I have finished my course, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory,"—and so he passes victorious to his crown.

I look on another scene. The Roman amphitheatre is crowded. Cæsar and Cæsar's slave are there. A tiger with bloody jaws crouches in the arena, and a worn, pale man lies dying on the red sand, the life blood drips from his mangled side; surely the heathen have triumphed. Not so. The dying man with his blood-stained finger makes the sign of the Cross in the sand, and murmurs, "in this sign shalt thou conquer," and so passes victorious to his rest. I see tender maidens there, who would have once shrunk from the sparkle of a sword, now calm and unmoved before the torturer's steel, and waiting for death with a smile of welcome. I see children, like the boy-martyr S. Pancras, brave as heroes before the lion, and the cruel eyes of the heathen multitude, and I know the secret of all these victors, it is the faith which comes by prayer.

I look on yet another scene, one of later days. It is a May morning, but the skies are dark as if with sorrow. The great square of Florence is crowded. Why is that silent crowd assembled? It has come out to see three good men die, one of them the greatest preacher of his age. Lately the people were hanging upon his words, and listening breathless, while he reasoned of righteousness,

temperance, and judgment to come. Now they have come to see Savonarola die. One strips him of his Priestly habit, saying, "Thus I separate thee from the Church militant, and the Church triumphant." And the martyr answers calmly, "from the Church militant you may separate me, but not from the Church triumphant, that is beyond your power ;" and so he passes victorious to the gibbet and the fire.

But the time would fail me to tell a tenth part of the triumphs gained by prayer. Let these suffice to show you that if you would lead a courageous life, a conquering, a patient, a praising life, in a word, the life of a Christian, you must make it a praying life. See, then, that you have the sword of prayer, and see that you use it. The best weapon will grow blunt and rusty if neglected. Hold fast your sword, and you will find that prayer, which brought rain to Elijah, and life to the Shunammite's son, and safety to Daniel, and strength to Jesus, will bring all you need to you. In times of temptation, when the voices of the world, and the promptings of the flesh, and the seductions of the devil lead to sin, then *pray*. Prayer will open the prison door to one fast in the misery and iron of sin ; prayer will summon the Good Physician to the leper of uncleanness, and He will say, "I will, be thou clean." Prayer will crush down Satan and make him fall, like Dagon before the Ark of God, since

"Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees."

That enemy is still walking to and fro in the earth as of old. He and his evil angels are busy among us in town and village, in city and hamlet, fulfilling their dark mission. Just as the holy Church of Christ is everywhere working for man's salvation, so everywhere the hosts of Satan are plotting for his destruction, and they must surely see much to encourage them. The secret sins of high places, the frauds and injustice of commerce, the fierce selfishness of men who are trampling one another in the race for wealth ; the shameful scenes presented by our great city streets night after night ; the discontent and the lust which lurk amid scenes of pastoral beauty, all these things must form an encouraging and joyful sight to devils. But presently, as the Evil Spirit passes through a great, wicked city, he enters a house, and sees a little child kneeling by its bedside, and saying, " Jesu, tender Shepherd, hear me," and before that baby voice Satan trembles. He enters another house, it is the home of an old man who has led a hard, selfish life, the Evil Spirit will surely find a welcome here. No, the old man is kneeling, his head bowed, his eyes wet with tears, his lips moving— " Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." In another house is a widow, who has lost husband, money, and home. As she sits in the desolate room, a dark shadow falls upon her, it is the Evil Spirit, who whispers, " curse God, and die." And behold she prayeth, she is kneeling, and speaking to God,— " Lord teach me from my heart to say, Thy will be done." Anon the Evil Spirits enter a crowded

Church, there are many sights here to cheer them ; they see careless, irreverent people, forgetful of the Service, forgetful of their sins, smiling and whispering in the very presence of God. But there is one at least there who prays with earnest voice, “ Lord, open the eyes of these people, that they may see.” Out on the wide ocean a large ship is sailing on her course. Thither fly the Spirits of Evil. They will, doubtless, find many friends here, among reckless men whose lives are passed far from the sound of Church bells. The Messengers of Evil enter the dark forecastle, and there, behold, a grey-haired sailor is kneeling by his chest, and saying, “ Lord, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” Oh ! my brothers, if you would resist the Evil One, and make him tremble, pray without ceasing.

And take heed *how* you pray. Too often we might say with truth,

“ My words fly up, my thoughts remain below,
Words without thoughts can ne’er to Heaven go.”

First, then, *pray faithfully*, believing that God can and will answer you, though not, perhaps, just as you expect. Many prayers are wasted because they are without faith ; those who utter them are just trying an experiment to see whether God will hear and answer or not.

Next, *pray persistently* ; don’t be disheartened because God does not answer at once. Elijah kept on praying

for rain, and at first there was no answer, but at the seventh time of looking the little cloud appeared, and then there was a great rain. It is often at the last moment, at the eleventh hour, just when all hope seems gone, that the answer comes.

" Just when the night is darkest, and silence so deep prevails,
That on the threshing-floor of the heart are heard Time's busy flails,
And the hour is filled with sadness, the curtains are drawn away,
And out of the misty shadows there blossoms the rose of day.
And so we have but to trust to our Heavenly Father's care,
Feeling our way in the darkness by the help of faith and prayer;
For we know that His heart is tender to all the children of men,
And our prayers He will surely answer, tho' we know not how, nor
when."

Next, *pray submissively*, striving to give up your will to God's will. Too often we pray as though we were trying to force God to give us our way, instead of asking to be made able to go His way. I know it is very hard to do this sometimes. But the secret of true prayer consists in emptying ourselves of self, and throwing ourselves on God. I have heard how a child which had been taught to understand the nature of prayer one night refused to pray. Its mother in vain urged the little one to kneel down, and at last the child said, "my little bird died yesterday, and I *cannot* say—Thy will be done." We must pray first of all to be able to say *that* with truth, then we may go on with our other prayers.

Next, *pray simply*. Some people pick out the longest and hardest words when they speak to God. My friends,

just talk to God as a child talks to its parents, in the simple language of your hearts. Tell God all about your needs, and your troubles, your sins and your fears, make God your friend. I remember being told by a relation that when he was living in Chambers in the Temple, he used to hear an old lawyer saying his prayers in the next rooms every night. The lawyer was an old, grey-headed man, yet he always said in his prayer, "Lord, make me a good boy." To some this may sound ludicrous, to me it seems rather beautiful, for in a long, and perhaps severely tempted life, the prayer which he never forgot was the simple petition of a child, learnt at his mother's knee. Of all the messages which are sent to Heaven, the surest to get there are those spoken by childish lips, or by those whose hearts have become as the heart of a little child.

Once more, pray unselfishly, pray for others. This intercession is precious in God's eyes. We are not alone, remember, but members of one great family, the Church. The Church on Earth joins with the Church in Paradise in prayers and intercession for all men.

" More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep and goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves and those who call them friend.
For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

Brethren, the choice is given to you, to me, to all men, the choice of two lives. One is such a life as the old heathen loved to lead, one which too many so-called Christians lead to day. It is a life of careless, selfish ease and pleasure, where the wine cup sparkles, and the loud laugh rings ; where the barque of life sails over summer seas, "Youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm." A life where the song is ever, " The great gods live for love, and wine, and laughter, come, crown your head with the flowers of the too short-lived rose, join our revelry, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." This is the one life. Then I look at the picture of another life. I see one who kneels in prayer before a bleeding Figure on a Cross, and I hear a voice, saying, " O sinner, look on the Saviour whom thou hast pierced, and let love, and shame, and sorrow, and pity, move thy heart to lead a life of prayer to Him, and of work for Him, who died for thee." My brethren, choose you this day whom ye will serve.

SERMON XV.

HALF A GOSPEL.

ACTS XVI. 31.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

THERE are some people who are very fond of talking about *preaching the Gospel*, and hearing *the Gospel*, but in many cases, what they call *the Gospel* is only *half the Gospel*. They take a text, or several texts of holy Scripture, and without studying the context, the words which precede and follow, try to draw out a meaning of their own. Often this proceeds from ignorance of the language in which the words were originally written. I know of a certain preacher, who said in his sermon, "They talk to us of Greek, but do you suppose Paul knew Greek?" He

really believed the Apostle wrote in English. Now to preach half a Gospel is a very fatal error. It is like taking a physician's prescription and leaving out half of the drugs. Such a course would be more likely to kill than cure the patient. Let us look into this matter more closely. After Adam had sinned, he tried to hide away from God. When we fall into sin, we do one of two things: one right, the other wrong: one wise, the other foolish. If we are wise, we go to God, and tell Him of our sin: we confess that we have done wrong, we show sorrow, we desire to do better. This is repentance. If we are foolish, we try to hide away from God, and so our sin remains unforgiven. Now this is a foolish thing to do, because we cannot hide from God, "to whom all hearts be open, all desires be known, and from whom no secrets are hid." We cannot hide away from God now, any more than we shall be able to hide on the Day of Judgment, by calling on the rocks to fall upon us, and the mountains to cover us.

And this is a foolish thing to do, because we are trying to hide from Him who alone can help us, restore us, pardon us. It would be a great act of folly to endeavour to hide away from a doctor, if we were ill, and how far more foolish is it to try to conceal ourselves from God, our Friend, whom we must meet one day as our Judge. And yet, my brethren, there are many who are thus trying to hide from God. One of the favourite hiding-places is respectability. The man who comes to Church once a

week, wearing a good coat, who puts the smallest possible coin into the offertory, who criticises the sermon, telling you whether he approved of it or not, such an one goes home quite easy in his mind, thoroughly well satisfied with himself. If he is pressed to say whether his life is altogether satisfactory, he tells you that he knows of nothing to make him uneasy. He is not perfect, of course, but he is not worse than his neighbours. Now this is the man who is hiding away from God, unconsciously, perhaps. He mistakes respectability for holiness, Church-going for worship. He has never looked into his own heart, he is hiding from God.

Again, there are people who hide from God in a place of fancied security. They take a text, and separate it from the rest of the Bible, and twist its meaning to meet their own wishes. Perhaps no text in God's Book has been more misused in this way than the familiar words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." There are many people who get hold of that text, and say, "*I* believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and, therefore *I* am saved; *I* have nothing to do, nor to fear." Then perhaps they try to comfort themselves with some hymn which teaches the same false doctrine, and they say,

"Weary, working, burden'd one,
Wherefore toil ye so?
Cease your doing; all was done
Long, long ago."

Now this is simply hiding from God. It is simply avoid-

ing the plain duties and responsibilities of a Christian. What should you say of a man who, if his house were on fire, were to take a dose of laudanum to send him to sleep, that he might not see the danger? You would call him a madman. Yet this is just what some people do, in another way. They know that they are not leading good lives ; they know that they are not fit to die, or to meet God. They know that they ought to repent, and amend their lives, and yet they take a sleeping draught. They take one text, neglecting all the rest of the Bible, and declare that they are saved. If any of you who hear me are thus trying to hide away from God, and from looking at your sins, come forth out of your hiding place, and let us look more closely at the favourite text, “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” At first sight it seems the easiest text in the whole Bible to follow. But if we examine it more carefully, we shall see it is about the hardest. At first that text was spoken to those who did *not* believe—the Jews. It taught them that they were to accept Jesus as the Son of God, as the Messiah foretold by the prophets. It taught them to believe that He who, as a little child, was shut out of the inn at Christmas, and worshipped by wise men at Epiphany, and Who as a man was crucified on Good Friday, was the Christ, very God of very God. And the text was spoken to the heathen, and it taught them to forsake their idols, and to know the true God, and to believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour. And the text is spoken to us

Christians, but it means something more to us than it meant to the Jews, or the heathen of old. To believe that Jesus Christ came on earth and died for us, that He rose again, that He will one day judge us, this will not save us. The devils believe all this, and tremble. The murderer, with his hand red with blood, believes this ; so does the drunkard, who is wrecking his life by excess ; so does the wretched woman hovering about our midnight streets ; so does the dishonest servant, or the knavish trader. All these will tell you that they believe these things, but are they in the way of salvation ? Ah ! no. To believe that Jesus has done all for us, and that we have nothing to do but to wait, and be saved, is simply to hide away from our duty, to shirk our work as Christians, to which we were pledged in Baptism. It is like going to sleep on a sinking wreck, when we ought to be struggling manfully for the shore. You have your part to do. If you want to see clearly, you must come to the light. If you want to be cured, you must come to the Physician ; and more than this, you must do what he tells you. No one would believe you, if you were very ill, and you consulted a doctor, and declared how fully you believed in him, and trusted him, and yet all the while refused to follow his orders. Yet so it is with many people who profess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they declare their belief in Him, their trust in Him, and still they will not do what He bids them. It is very easy for any of us to say, "I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,"

but we must remember what we are committed to by this belief. It means that we must keep the commandments of God, that we must walk in His ways, that we must give up our will to God's Will, that we must take the Gospel as our guide. If you hear a man say, "I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," look at his life—"by their fruits ye shall know them."

Too many people send themselves to sleep with the notion that they have only to believe, and that everything will be done for them. This is a very popular sort of religion, because it seems so easy. But we do not find much holiness among this class of people. I have known drunkards, swearers, adulterers, and dishonest men, who were always talking about their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe me, to be a Christian is not an easy thing. The way to heaven is not paved with roses for anyone ; and no one gains a view of the celestial country without hard-climbing and struggling. If we are really Christ's people we must expect to find what He found—a sad Gethsemane, a place of a skull, a bitter Cross. If religion were really as easy as some people think, if it meant doing nothing, a life without self-sacrifice, without watchfulness, or fighting, it would be far more popular than it is. Thousands refuse religion, because they stumble at the words, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me." My friends, feeling, without doing, is not true religion. "Faith without works is dead, being

alone. What doth it profit, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." If we would enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, we must do something more than cry, "Lord, Lord;" we must do the will of our Father which is in Heaven. We must not rest only in believing, but try to act up to our belief; we must bring "forth fruits meet for repentance;" that is, we must amend our lives by God's help, and show that our repentance is real by our acts. In a word, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ means to try humbly to follow His example. It means, to shape our thoughts, and words, and works, on the model which He has set before us. It means, to keep ourselves pure and chaste, to live peaceably with all men, to forgive others who do us wrong, to be charitable to those in need, to be patient under suffering, to love God's way better than our own, to obey His commands as they are uttered by His Bible, and the voice of His Holy Church; "if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them," then, and then only, can we say with truth, "I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

Remember, that when we die, our works do follow us, not our thoughts and feelings. We may have thought and felt many grand things, but they will not go with us to judgment, our *works* will. Our good deeds and our evil deeds, the things done in the flesh, will be brought into judgment. My brethren, think on these things.

Think how solemn and awful a matter is our salvation, how precious is our soul, for which Christ died. Do not value your soul lightly, as the soldiers did our Master's robe at the Crucifixion ; casting lots whose your soul shall be, Christ's or Satan's. God speaks to each of you to-night, and asks the solemn question—" Where art thou ?" Do you ask yourselves, " Where am I in God's sight? where should I be if death came to me to-night, and brought the message, ' Thou shalt die, and not live ? ' "

SERMON XVI.

WHAT CONFIRMATION MEANS.

ACTS VIII. 17.

"Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

I WANT you to ask yourselves two plain questions, first, why ought I to be confirmed? secondly, if I am confirmed, what ought Confirmation be to me? I want you to ask these questions, and to get the right answer, because Confirmation is a holy rite which is often neglected, and frequently misunderstood.

Why ought I to be confirmed? For three reasons (i.) because the Church to which I belong commands it; (ii.) because God's word, the Bible, teaches it; (iii.) because

of the great spiritual benefits which will come to me from it.

The command of the Church about Confirmation is very plain. Those who bring a Child to Holy Baptism, are commanded thus:—"Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism, set forth for that purpose." That means to say, the child is to be confirmed when he has been taught the elements, the A B C, of the Christian faith. Many people think lightly of Confirmation, as of little, or no importance, but the Church thinks very differently, and solemnly charges the God-parents, thus early in the child's life, to see that he be confirmed in due time.

(II.) Next, what does the Bible say about Confirmation? The Church commands what God commands and teaches in the Bible. Some persons bring forward an objection, and say, "Jesus Christ did not confirm, and we do not know that he ordered Confirmation." But neither did Jesus baptize, and yet no Christian doubts that He gave us the Sacrament of Baptism. And, again, in one sense, our Saviour was Himself confirmed, since we read that after His Baptism, "He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power." But how do we know that Jesus ordered and approved of Confirmation? Why, because directly after His Ascension, we find his Apostles con-

firming and baptizing people. In the text, we read of S. Peter and S. John going down to Samaria, and laying their hands on those who were baptized, and they received the Holy Ghost. S. Peter and S. John did here just what their successors, the Bishops, do now; and S. Paul at Ephesus confirmed the disciples of S. John the Baptist, who had been baptized by him. Can we reasonably believe that the Apostles would have done this if Jesus had not taught them, and commanded Confirmation? Without doubt, Confirmation was one of the many doctrines which Jesus taught His Apostles during the great forty days which elapsed between His Resurrection and Ascension; when He explained to them "many things pertaining to the Kingdom of God," that is, His Church on earth. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of Baptism, and of the laying on of hands, as being well-known, and as being among the elements, the A B C, of the Christian Faith.

If we turn to Church History after the Bible times, we shall find that from the earliest days, that is a hundred years after S. Paul's time, down to the present moment, it has been the rule to present baptized persons to the Bishop to be confirmed by him.

Now, let us take the third reason for being confirmed. In Confirmation, God the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and Giver of life, the Comforter, the Strengthener, is given to us by the laying on of the hands of God's servant, the

Bishop. Thus strength is given us from on high to lead a Godly and a virtuous life, to fight manfully against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to show ourselves Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto our Life's end. Though not occupying exactly the same place as the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, yet Confirmation is a rite of a sacramental character, otherwise it would be but an idle form. The laying on of the Bishop's hands must mean something very important, the giving of the Holy Spirit, or it can mean nothing at all ; and to an unbeliever it appears a useless and meaningless act. Just as in the blessed Sacrament of the Altar, either Jesus is present, or He is not ; and if He *is* present, the Sacrament means everything to us ; and if He is not present, it means nothing ; so in Confirmation, if the Holy Spirit is given, it means everything to us, if not, it means nothing. Now in a Sacrament, as you know, there is an outward visible sign, and an inward spiritual grace. So in Confirmation, there is the laying on of hands, which is the outward visible sign, and there is the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is the inward spiritual grace. This is enough, I think, to show you that Confirmation is no slight or unimportant matter, and that to disregard it is a sin and a folly, since you profess that you are strong enough to do God's will without His help.

Next, I go on to speak of some objections which are put forward to Confirmation, and some mistakes which are made about it. The first and most common objec-

tion is this : how can the Holy Spirit be given by the laying on of a man's hands, for a Bishop is only a man after all ? Now this is a very foolish objection, and the answer to it is very simple. God has so willed it. God has given this special power and authority to Bishops, and to them only, since God works by human means. Let me try to put this very plainly. If I were to sign a warrant for a murderer to be executed, he would laugh at the warrant. But if the Queen signed it, he would be executed forthwith. Why? Because the Queen has a special authority given her by God, which I have not. If someone in this parish had robbed his neighbour, and I were to sign an order for his imprisonment, he would not care, because I am not a magistrate. But if the squire, who is a County Magistrate, signed the order, the thief would go to prison, because the squire has an authority which I have not. So I as a priest can do what a layman cannot do, I can rightly and duly minister in Church, and celebrate the Blessed Sacrament. Now the highest officer of State could not do that, because he has not had the authority given him. But I cannot confirm, the Bishop only can do that, because a special authority belongs to him.

Again, if no grace is given by the laying on of a Bishop's hands in Confirmation, neither is it given to a man who in the same way is ordained priest or deacon. But S. Paul, who ordained Timothy, says distinctly, " Stir up the gift which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."

If there was grace given by the hands of the Apostles and Bishops then, why should we suppose that it is not given now?

Another objection urged against Confirmation is, that we cannot *see* any special gift given to those who are confirmed ; and that some do not lead good lives afterwards. But we cannot see the Holy Spirit, which, like the wind, "bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth." You cannot see the wind which tears off your roof, but you believe in its presence and its power. We cannot see the spiritual change in a baptized child, or the change in the elements in Holy Communion, but we believe in both. If we only credit what we can see, our belief will be narrow indeed. To say, moreover, that some confirmed persons lead bad lives, is no argument against Confirmation : the fault is not with the means of grace, but with the people who won't use them. If a man chooses to starve within reach of good food, you would not lay the blame on the food.

Another objection which people bring against Confirmation is, that if we are confirmed, we take upon ourselves our sins, which our God-parents took upon *themselves* in Baptism. Now this is perhaps the most foolish of all objections. No one can take upon himself the sins and responsibilities of another. *You*, not your God-parents, are bound by your baptismal vows, they never were.

They never pledged *themselves*, they spoke in your name. Just as if a man were to write a letter for a friend who could not write, it would be written in his name, and he, not the actual writer, would be bound by it. When a man of business tells his clerk to write a letter involving some thousands of pounds, it is the merchant, not the clerk, who is responsible. Besides, Confirmation does *not* mean taking our baptismal vows upon us, we have done that already. As soon as you were able to learn, you were taught what a solemn vow, promise, and profession you had made by the mouth of your God-parents, you were asked, in the words of the Catechism, "Dost thou not think that *thou* art bound to believe and to do as thy God-fathers and God-mothers promised for thee?" and you were taught to answer, "Yea, verily, and by God's help, so I will." That means, I will *now*, not at some future time, when I have been confirmed. If this is not taking our baptismal vows upon us, there is no meaning in the words.

Many mistakes are made about Confirmation, because people think too much about what *they* are going to do, instead of what God is going to do to them, and for them. But the great point in Confirmation is not so much what we are going to do, as what is going to be done for us. One says, "If I am confirmed, I am going to confirm and take upon me all that was promised for me in Baptism, and I am not sure that I can do this." But it is not so. You are not going to *confirm*,

but to *be confirmed*. What you are going to do is very little, what God will do for you is everything. Another says, "*I am too young to be confirmed.*" Why? You are not too young to need and to receive grace, help, and strength from God's Holy Spirit. If an infant is not too young to receive grace in Baptism, a young person who has been taught the elements of the Christian faith, which is what God requires of him then, is not too young to receive strength to do what he has been taught is God's will. Another says, "*I am too old to be confirmed.*" How can that be? If Confirmation gives us help from God, the gift of the Holy Spirit, none are too old to need it, and to receive it. One urges, "*I am too ignorant to be confirmed.*" But it is not a matter of learning, it is not a matter of the head at all. If you know the difference between right and wrong, what God would have you to do, you need strength to do right, and that does not come from head knowledge, but from the gift of the Holy Spirit. Another says, "*I am unfit for so solemn a rite.*" But if you need pardon for past sin, and strength to amend, the sooner you seek them in Confirmation the better. Those only are unfit who are wilfully sinning, and mean to continue in sin. These are not only cut off from Confirmation, but also from God and pardon.

I say then, that all baptized persons in the Church, whether young or old, learned or ignorant, should come to Confirmation, since they have only to come believing in God's promise, and anxious to lead a holy life.

They come weak, to be made strong : empty, to be made full of the Holy Ghost, Who will give them the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. *Wisdom* to choose the one thing needful ; *Understanding* to know how to gain it ; *Counsel*, the habit of asking God's guidance ; *Strength* to follow where He shall lead ; *Knowledge*, that they may learn to know God ; *Godliness*, that knowing Him, they may grow like Him ; *Fear*, or reverence and worship of His Holy Name.

You, then, who have not been confirmed, dare you turn away from God's unspeakable gift? How *can* you lead holy lives unless you be strengthened from above? And you who have been confirmed, and who feel that your lives are not satisfactory, remember, it is your own fault. The Holy Spirit was given to you, but you may have resisted Him, and fought against Him. To you, I say, return to your Lord, get you to your knees, get you to your Lord right humbly, to Him who says, "Return unto me, for I have redeemed you." And to the rest I say, may God move your hearts to be in earnest, and to come forward as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, seeking in Confirmation grace where alone it can be found.

SERMON XVII.

BIBLE READING. I.

ACTS VIII. 30.

"Understandest thou what thou readest?"

I AM going to talk to you about Bible reading. It is unnecessary, I think, to tell you, as Christian people, that we ought to read our Bible. My object is to make your reading more interesting, and more profitable to you. Very often the time spent in Bible reading is time wasted. There is a certain sect in the East whose Priests use a praying machine. Such mechanical praying seems very foolish to us; and yet much of our Bible reading is just as mechanical, and just as useless. There are people who read a Chapter or two of the Bible every day, but

they read like machines, they neither mark, learn, nor inwardly digest. These people do not read with a right purpose. They do not read to discover the beauties, the treasures, the teachings of the Bible ; they read a chapter full of hard names sometimes, and think it is doing them good. But remember that *reading* the Bible does us no good, unless we *understand* what we read. I have met with people who have gone abroad to a beautiful country, just to be able to say that they had been there. They never noticed the beauties of the scenery, their one object was to get to a certain place, and then get back again. So it is with many Bible readers. Their one object is to get through so many chapters or verses.

Some of the first discoveries of gold in Australia were made by accident. A man saw a mass of rock, and struck it carelessly with a pickaxe, and broke it, and found that it contained gold. Now some parts of the Bible may appear like the rock, hard and uninteresting, till we can work into them, then we find gold. Many persons find the earlier books of the Old Testament like the rock. They ask what good does it do Christians to read about Adam, and Cain and Abel, and the Ark, and the old Patriarchs, and their journeys and sacrifices ; or about the wicked Kings of Israel and Judah. They have been dead for these hundreds of years, what good can it do us to read about them ? I will try to tell you. We shall find the gospel in these old days, and these old sacrifices, or rather the shadows of it, all leading up to the Cross,

and the One Great Sacrifice. The seed of the Cross, that tree of life on which Christ died, was sown in the Garden of Eden.

How then ought we to approach our Bible reading? First of all, we should begin with earnest prayer for light, that we may understand what we read. We may make mistakes about the Bible as well as any other book. If you were to read some medical works, and had not received the education of a doctor, you would soon fancy that you had several different diseases; and if you were to try to treat yourself for them, you would probably become really ill, or perhaps die. In the same way people may make mistakes about the Bible. A lady once came to me during a Mission utterly miserable, because she thought she had committed "the unpardonable sin," without knowing what it was. John Bunyan, the author of "The Pilgrim's Progress," nearly went mad at one time from the same mistake. To say then, as some people do, that "the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants," is to say a very foolish, and a very dangerous thing. We must have light to read the Bible by; light given directly by God in answer to prayer; and light from the teaching and explanation of God's Holy Church, the guardian and interpreter of Scripture.

Men of science have just taught us how to store electricity, so that we can lay in a stock of it, just as we lay in coals, sufficient to light our lamps for a given time. Well, we can store light to understand the Bible by; the

more we pray over our Bible, the more the light comes, the more light we store in ourselves. I have read of a Clergyman who once saw a man breaking stones on a road, and kneeling at his work. "I wish I could break up the difficulties in my parish as easily as you break the stones," said the Clergyman. "Perhaps, Sir," answered the man, "you don't go to work in the same way—on your knees."

If we want to break up the difficulties in the Bible we must approach them on our knees, praying to God—"Show me the wondrous things of Thy law." First then, we must pray about our Bible reading, and *secondly* we must meditate over what we read. Food not digested is almost as bad as poison ; and so many people get no good, but positive harm, from their Bible reading, because they do not digest what they read. The cow eats during the day, but does not digest her food till afterwards, when she chews the cud. Many Bible readers take in their spiritual food, but do not assimilate it, do not make it part of themselves. As properly digested food makes our bodies what they are, flesh, and bone, and blood, and muscle ; so God's Word properly digested makes a member of the Church a *Bible Christian*, in the true sense of the term. His spiritual nature is built up and formed of spiritual food, given in one way by the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and in another way by the Bible. Take a little time then to think over what you read, and so shall your souls be nourished.

Next, we should read our Bible, every part of it, to find Jesus there. Let Him, the goodly pearl of great price, be the object of all your search. You know how they collect gold dust? They take the soil which has been dug out, and wash it in running water, carefully watching for the sparkling grains. Well, we should take what we have dug out of the Bible by study, and examine it carefully, and look into it again and again, till we find gold, signs of Jesus Christ. When we approach one of our English towns or villages, the most conspicuous object is the tower or spire of the Church or Minster, rising above all other buildings, and casting its shadow over all. So when we approach our Bible reading, we should see Jesus first, and His Cross rising above all other topics, and casting its shadow on every page.

Let me try to apply this teaching to some parts of the Old Testament. Let us begin in the Garden of Eden, where the first Adam fell because he would not give up his own will to the Will of God. There we shall see the shadow of another Garden, and of Jesus the Second Adam, who pleased not Himself, but gave up His Will to do that of the Father. Truly says a saint of old, "if you would understand the Old Testament, you must begin with the New." And another ancient writer tells us that Jesus is the beginning and the end, veiled in the Old Dispensation, and revealed in the New. We see Him foreshadowed in the patience, the sufferings, and the triumphs of His servants. In Abel we see Jesus slain by

His brethren. In Abraham we see Jesus a wanderer from His own home, in Isaac we look on the willing sacrifice of the Saviour, in Jacob we see Jesus toiling, and taking upon Himself the form of a servant, in Joseph we behold Jesus rejected and sold.

Turn then to the earliest page of the Bible, and in Genesis see Jesus and the Cross. Look on the first Adam in whom all men die, and your thoughts will be carried to the second Adam in Whom all shall be made alive. The first Adam is formed in original righteousness, in the likeness of God. The second Adam is the express image of the Father, without spot or blemish, "full of grace and truth." We read that God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and opened his side, from whence was created Eve, the mother of all living. Jesus, the second Adam, sleeps the death-sleep on the cross, and from His opened side there flows the life-giving streams of the sacraments of the Church, who is the mother of all the faithful living unto God. Thus we learn that we get our natural life from Adam, and our spiritual life from Christ.

Now look at the place where Adam sinned—it was a *garden*. There was committed the first act of disobedience, there was sown the seed of all sins. Look next at the place where Jesus atoned for the sins of Adam and of all men. It was in a *garden* that Jesus suffered His agony and bloody sweat. Close by the place where they crucified

Him was a garden, and there they laid Jesus in His grave. In the garden of Eden Adam wanted to be as God, knowing good and evil. In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus humbled Himself in the dust, and prayed that He might not do His own will, but that of the Father. Adam was cursed, and bidden to till the ground in the sweat of his face. Jesus laboured not for the meat that perisheth, but to give the Bread of eternal life, and He did this not only in the sweat of His face, but in the sweat of His blood. Adam sinned with the lust of the eye, in looking on the forbidden fruit. To atone for this Jesus hid His eyes in the dust, and was blindfolded by His enemies. Adam sinned with His ears, in listening to the tempter. Jesus, to atone for this, allowed His ears to listen to blasphemy and insult. Adam sinned with his hands, in taking the forbidden fruit. Jesus suffered His Hands to be bound with cords and pierced with nails. Adam sinned with his mouth in making idle excuses for his sin. Jesus, in atonement, was smitten on the mouth ; and when He was reviled was dumb as a sheep before her shearers, and opened not His mouth. From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil Adam plucked the fruit of sin and death. From the cross, the tree of life, was given by Jesus the fruit of life and immortality, with leaves for the healing of the nations. Adam was cursed, and the ground along with him, and thorns sprang up. Jesus bore the curse, and the thorns were formed into His crown.

We see Adam, after his fall, clothed in the skin of

dead animals; before he had been clothed only with innocence and purity. Now, since sin and shame had come, he wore a dress of shame. Now we look at Jesus, and we see Him Who knew no sin, yet suffered for all sin, clad in the purple robe of scorn. Later, we see Jesus stripped and nailed to the cross; so that as the first Adam naked fell into sin, the second Adam naked atoned for sin, that He might arise and go to His Father, and receive the best robe, not only for Himself, but for His redeemed, of whom He says, "they shall walk with me in white."

Let us look next at the sacrifice of Abel. The name *Abel* means *breath*, or *vapour*, and he was well named, since his brief life was even as a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away. How like in this respect is the life of Abel to that of Christ, whose earthly existence was but for thirty-three years, and then "he was cut off from the land of the living." Abel was born at a period when Adam and Eve were sorrowing over the effects of sin, when the whole creation was groaning and travailing together from the same cause. Jesus came into the world when it was dead in trespasses and sin, "full of violence and wicked habitations." Abel, we know, was a keeper of sheep, and so he was a type of Jesus the Good Shepherd, the great Shepherd of the sheep. Abel was the first person to offer sacrifice, and thus was a sign of Jesus, our great High Priest, Who offered a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. With

the offering of Abel we get the first idea of the system of sacrifice which continues all through the Old Testament, and which leads up to the One Perfect Sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary. Notice that in Abel's sacrifice there was shedding of blood, and his offering was accepted. Cain's sacrifice without blood was rejected. Thus from the beginning God taught men the mystery of the Cross, that "without blood-shedding there is no remission;" that all sacrifice for sin must be offered with the blood of the victim, a type of the precious blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. Notice, too, that Abel as a priest not only offered the blood of lambs, but his own blood, since he was sacrificed at the hand of his brother. Here we have a clear type of Jesus offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world by the hand of his brethren.

"Offered was He for greatest and for least,
Himself the Victim, and Himself the Priest."

But let us pause for the present. I would have you search the Scriptures in this way, and they will become living words to you. There is an instrument called an *Æolian harp*, which is silent till placed where the wind can blow upon it, then its strings give forth sweet music. Your Bible will be silent to you till the breath of God blows upon it, then it will be the music of the gospel to you. Old legends say that when the rising sun shone upon the statue of Memnon, in Egypt, the figure uttered tuneful sounds. So when the sun of the Holy Spirit

shines upon the pages of your Bible, God will send forth thence His voice, yea, and that a mighty voice. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

SERMON XVIII.

BIBLE READING. II.

ACTS XVIII. 30.

"Understandest thou what thou readest?"

I HAVE said that we should read the Bible with earnest prayer for light to understand it; and that we should read it so that we may find Jesus in every part of it, our great Example. Just as every tiny stream and brook runs into a river, and "all the rivers run to the sea," so all parts of the Bible, all little side streams, which seem mere trifles, meet together in Christ. Next, read the Bible to gain instruction for *yourselves*; do not try to fit the warnings and teachings and threats of the Bible on others, but on yourselves. People too often study God's word to

find out their neighbour's sins, instead of their own. The dishonesty of Gehazi, reminds us of one acquaintance, and the churlishness of Nabal is so like another. Covetous Ahab, and lying Ananias, Peter denying and Judas selling his Master, all remind us of someone, only that someone is never *ourselves*. People sometimes enjoy reading the Bible because they can condemn others from it. They need the sharp message which came to David—"thou art the man!" In the old days of Greece, they tell us of a philosopher who went about from place to place with a lantern, and when asked what he was seeking, he answered that he was looking for an honest man. We are too fond of taking the lantern of God's Word, and examining our neighbours with it. Let us try to turn the light more strongly on ourselves. After we have been tracing the sins and weaknesses of our brethren in the histories of the Bible ; after we have been reading about meanness, and cruelty, and falsehood, and selfishness, let us look into the looking-glass, and ask ourselves the question, "What sayest thou of *thyself*, is it not true that thou art the man?" When you read of Jesus despised and rejected, and forsaken by His disciples, ask yourself—have *I* not done this? have not I turned from the loving gaze of Jesus to look on some sin, or unholy pleasure of the world? When you read of those in the parable who refused to come, the one going to his farm, another to his merchandise ; ask yourself—have not *I* done this? Have not I made these foolish excuses for neglecting my duty? When you read

of the Agony of Jesus, and the insults, and the mockery, and the spitting, and the blindfolding, and the Cross, ask yourself this—had *I* no hand in this? Do my angry words never insult the ears of Jesus now? are not my vile passions and lusts like the spitting on the face of Jesus now? does not my pride, with which I crown myself, crown Jesus with thorns? Have no sins of mine pierced the hands, and feet, and side of Jesus? When you read of that savage shout, “Crucify Him!” stop, and ask yourself—have *I* ever joined in that cry? When it was a question of giving up something for Christ’s sake, when the cross of self-denial was offered to me, did not I say, “Crucify Him!—let me go free?” Have I not come, like the young ruler, running to Jesus, till He has bidden me deny myself, and then have I not come away sorrowful? If you would make your Bible reading useful, you must turn its light inwards, you must ask some such questions as these.

Next, when you read your Bible, try to *realize* what you read. I heard of a poor woman who heard the account of the Saviour’s sufferings read; she was very ignorant, and being told that these events happened long ago, and in a foreign land, expressed a hope that after all the account might not be true. I believe that many people read the Bible, or hear it read, and never feel it, never realize its truth. I want you to make your Bible a living book. Let each holy season of the Church speak to you a living message from God’s word. In Advent, try to pic-

ture the first and second coming of Christ ; the humbleness of the first, the grandeur of the second. Try to realize the signs in Heaven and earth : the sea roaring, men's heart's failing them, and the sign of the Son of Man blazing in the sky. At Christmas, when the Bible brings the sweet invitation, " Let us go now even unto Bethlehem," try to make that invitation real, try to go in spirit to the grotto, and to see the Holy Child lying in coarse swaddling clothes.

In Lent, let the Bible lessons lead you into the wilderness with Jesus, " glad with Him to suffer pain." Let the words of Scripture teach you the awful nature of sin, the subtle power of the tempter, and the way to meet temptation. Then let the sad story of Holy Week be real, not mere history : let it carry you to Gethsemane and Calvary, that you may suffer with Him who suffered for you. In the blessed calm of Easter Eve, let the words of the Bible take you to the garden grave, try to *see* the place where they laid Him, and to feel like one who says,

" Laid in the garden, full of bloom,
Who lieth here ?
Sweet frankincense His winding-sheet,
The rock his bier ?
Ah ! Bend Thy knee and worship low,
Jesus lieth here !

" Faint, weary, worn, with warfare sore,
Who sleepeth here ;
With thorny diadem on brow,
And marks of spear ?

Oh sinner, One who suffered much for thee,
Jesus lieth here !

" And ye who pass this rocky cell to-day,
Draw softly near,
Learn from His peace that Christian Death
None need to fear,
Spoiled of its bitterness, its sweets remain,
Jesus lieth here."

At Whitsuntide, when you read of the gift of the Holy Spirit, try to realize—" My body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, how am I keeping it ; am I trying to preserve myself pure and holy, knowing who dwells there ;—or am I grieving the Holy Spirit of God, by refusing to listen to His voice speaking within me ? If the light that is in me be darkness, how great is that darkness. Am I alive spiritually, or dead ? I know that if a tree be not growing, it is dying ; so is it with our souls, if I am not growing better, I am growing worse, which is it with me ?"

When at Ascensiontide the Bible tells you of Jesus going up into Heaven, to prepare a place for you, ask yourself the question—" What sort of place in Heaven would suit me ? Should I like to be 'for ever with the Lord.' I hope to go to Heaven some day, but do I ever let my heart and mind thither ascend, is there anything of Heaven in my daily life *now*—I know that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, if I do not strive after holiness now, and here, what chance have I of seeing God there and hereafter."

It is a custom in Greenland for a stranger, when knocking at the door, to ask, "Is God in this house?" If the answer, "Yes," is given, he enters. Let the Bible ask you this question. When you read God's word, listen for God's voice asking you the question—"Is God in this house?" Is it well with thee, is it well with the husband, is it well with the child? Let your Bible speak to your innermost heart, and let your answer be, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

SERMON XIX.

A BASKET OF SUMMER FRUIT.

Harvest Festival.

AMOS VIII. 1.

"Behold a basket of summer fruit."

As God set before the prophet Amos a basket of summer fruit, as a sign or parable concerning Israel; so at Harvestide God sets before us a basket of summer fruit, to teach us lessons to our soul's health, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

You who read your Bible must see how often, both in the Old and New Testaments, God refers to agriculture and farm work, and to the fruit of the trees and fields, as teaching lessons. We read of corn, and wine, and oil, of

the barrel of meal, the sheaves of Joseph's dream, the manna in the wilderness, the cedars of Lebanon, the tree planted by the water-side, the fields white unto harvest, the plough, the sower, the fig-tree, and the mustard-seed, the ear of wheat, the vine and the branches, the last great harvest, and the angel reapers. In all these instances, and in many others, the Holy Spirit leads us "through nature up to nature's God," to learn a parable from the fig-tree, and all the trees."

To-day God has set before us a basket of summer fruit. What fruit shall we gather from it, what lessons shall we learn? First, I gather this: that in preparing the earth for a harvest crop, and our lives for a crop of holiness, we must expect hard labour, and often sorrow. The curse pronounced on Adam was, "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread;" Adam had to till the ground, which was stony, and weedy, and hard, bringing forth thorns and thistles. Jesus, the second Adam, laboured to cultivate man's fallen nature, and to raise men up, and make them grow in grace, and bring forth fruit. How did He do this? In the sweat of His face, in the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, in the death-sweat of Calvary. So it is with us, whether we cultivate our fields or our souls, it is the same thing, we must do it in the sweat of our face, with hard labour. The ground naturally brings forth thorns, thistles, weeds, it must be cultivated. Our nature naturally is unfit for good, it brings forth evil thoughts, bad feelings, sinful lusts; both the ground and

our nature need cultivation, and that implies labour, and frequently sorrow.

I was reading lately an account of the great prairie and forest fires so numerous in the western states of America. It is a curious fact, that after the fire has passed over a district, plants and trees, different from those which formerly grew there, appear on the soil. In Vermont, the hickory grew after the fire where it had never been known before, and in other places, poplars and beeches sprang up where, previous to the fire, only fir trees flourished. After the great fire of London, a flower called the Golden Rocket appeared, and beautified places wasted by the flame, though it had never been seen in that district before. The seeds of these trees and plants are lying in the ground, and it needs the fire to make them live and grow. Now, I learn this ; that we sometimes need the fire of affliction to bring out the good in us. Selfish men, or avaricious men, or proud men, need the cleansing fires of sorrow ; then the need of better things, lying buried in their hearts, springs into growth, and, like the Golden Rocket after the fire, the flowers of a holy life blossom where the flames have been. It is God's love, not His anger, which sends the fire. Our life needs clearing, purging, that it may bring forth new and better fruit, some of us can only be saved "as by fire."

You all know, in preparing ground for a crop, how important *ploughing, deep ploughing*, is. The man who

wants a good crop will not just scratch the surface of the earth, he will drive in the ploughshare deep. You all remember the old story of the farmer, who told his son that there was a treasure buried in a certain field. The son dug and dug, and ploughed and ploughed, and at last he found his treasure in the form of a heavy crop. So it is with our lives. If we are to bring fruits unto holiness *now* (and remember we must not wait till the end of the world for the harvest, there is a harvest for our souls every year and every day), we must plough deep, we must drive down the ploughshare of self-examination, we must break up the hard ground of pride and self-righteousness, where no good thing can grow; we must plough deep, till we find some old buried sin, hiding in some secret place. It would never do for a farmer to look at the surface of a field, and to say, "That looks like a good field." He must plough deep, and see what the soil is like. So with our lives. A man must not say, "I think I am good enough; I am as good a Christian as my neighbours." Plough deep, my brothers, go down to the very bottom of your heart, pray as did David, "Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." There can be no fruits of a better life till you have ploughed deep, and broken up the fallow ground.

Next, let us think of *the sowing of the seed*. What we sow we reap. If we sow wheat, we reap wheat, food for

man ; if we sow hemlock, we reap poison ; if we sow weeds, we reap weeds ; " Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles." This holds good of our spiritual lives. We reap here according to what we sow. Our good deeds, and our evil deeds, bear their fruit here. The end of the world is the final harvest, but we are always reaping harvests here, just as we are always sowing. The diligent scholar at school rises step by step to distinction, and wins prizes. That is his harvest. The steady, persevering, honest worker, gains the respect and confidence of his fellows, and obtains a good position, and makes money—that's *his* harvest. The God-fearing man, who tries humbly to do his duty, and who keeps near to God by using the means of grace, has a hope, a peace, a joy, which the world cannot give—that is *his* harvest. Or look at the reverse side of the picture. Go into a mad-house, and see a man driven out of his senses by drunkenness. He sowed the strong drink, he reaps the harvest. Or go into a prison cell, and look at that white-faced criminal cowering in a corner. He cannot look an honest man in the face now ; he sowed the seed of dishonesty, and he reaps the harvest. He sowed the seed of disgraceful acts, and he reaps disgrace. The sin to-day will not wait till the Day of Judgment to bear fruit, it will bear it now ; and after all this comes the end, and the final judgment on our seed-time and harvest. Brethren, take heed what you sow now. Your words, your acts, your thoughts, are seed ; you may cast them forth care-

lessly, but like seed thoughtlessly dropped in the ground, they will grow, and if it be bad seed, you will be terrified at your harvest.

Look at the passionate, bad-tempered man, always saying angry, cruel words. What is he sowing. Nettles and thistles, which not only sting and wound others, but hurt him also. Look at the bad parent, setting an evil example to his family, what is he sowing? Sharp thorns to prick his own heart with, the sight of his children growing up to ruin, growing up to curse him. Look at the selfish man, who only lives and thinks for himself, what is he sowing? Brambles to tear and wound all around. No one loves a selfish man, and he loves none but himself. When he dies, there are no flowers of loving memory to blossom on his grave, nothing but brambles—"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

But remember this ; you may never have sown this bad seed, and you may think that because you are not an open evil-doer, that all is well with you. But if you have sown *nothing for God*, you will reap *nothing from God*. If you have no loving fellowship with God here, you will have none hereafter. If you and God are strangers here, you will be strangers hereafter. Neglect of duty is a great sin. Men of science tell us, that if a flock of pigeons of various colours, white, brown, and speckled, are let loose to go wild in a desert island, their descendants will



be all of one colour, a dusky slate-colour, they will be simply wild pigeons. All the beauties which cultivation gave to them are gone, their species has degenerated, gone back. In like manner, if you have a garden planted with vines, and apple trees, and strawberries, and roses, and if you neglect it, and allow it to remain untilled, in course of years it will produce wild grapes, sour crab-apples, tiny wild strawberries, and dog roses. It is just the same with men and women. God has given us certain senses, and faculties, to be used in certain ways, if they are neglected, they degenerate. If our eyes are not used, if they are kept covered with a bandage, or if we live in the dark, we become blind. If a limb is kept tied up, and unused, it shrivels up, and becomes useless. If our mind is not properly exercised, it becomes waste and blank. So it is with our souls. If we neglect them, they degenerate, our spiritual nature grows weak. The longer we go without doing a duty, the harder it becomes to do it, because we are degenerating, getting farther and farther from the likeness of God. As the neglected garden or field grows more weedy, more wild, more unfruitful, so does our spiritual nature, if neglected. God has given us certain spiritual faculties, if we neglect them we lose them in time. For instance, God has given us a conscience, which tells us when we do right or wrong; and He has given us a faculty which we may call *spiritual hearing*, by which we listen to the voice of conscience. But if we neglect this faculty, conscience no longer warns

us, or at least we do not hear it, we have become spiritually deaf. God has also given us spiritual eye-sight, by which we can see the love and wisdom of God all around us ; but if we neglect this gift, we see nothing good or beautiful, nothing to be thankful for in the world. This is *spiritual blindness*. Thus it is with all the other spiritual faculties which God has given us "to profit withal."

Thus far, then, we have learnt the necessity of preparing our hearts, that God's good seed may grow in them, and the importance of sowing good seed ourselves, since we reap what we sow. We have seen, too, the terrible sin of sowing nothing, of neglecting the gifts which God has given us. Let us gather one more lesson from the basket of summer fruit, which this harvest sets before us, the lesson of thankfulness. Let us thank God, not only for the harvest crops, giving bread to strengthen man's heart, but also for the better bread of holy teaching which the harvest provides, bread to strengthen man's soul. Some people have refused to have a Harvest Thanksgiving this year because it has been a so-called bad harvest. But surely they are wrong. We ought not to thank God in proportion to what He gives us ; or say to Him, " You have not given us enough this year to be worth a thanksgiving." Let us rather do as a little boy did, who had only a crust for his dinner ; he took his crust, and said his grace in these words, " I could eat more, but thank God for all."

Yes, let us end our Harvest Festival with the words—
thank God for all.

"And with a quickened pulse, we'll gaze upon the bright love looks,
That woo us all day long, from trees, and flowers, and murmuring
brooks ;
And see a beauteous, heavenly thought, in everything around ;
And lessons learn of faith and hope from every sight and sound.
And, God ! our cold ungrateful hearts teach Thou to feel and know
How much Thy bounteous hand hath bless'd this world of sin and woe,
How deep the debt of thankfulness that unto Thee we owe,"

SERMON XX.

JESUS AT THE DOOR.

REV. III. 20.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock."

My friends, Jesus says that to each one of you. He has come over and over again to the door of our house, to the door of our hearts, and has found them fast barred and bolted. He is standing even now longing to enter into our houses, our hearts, our lives, and we will not open to Him.

"O Jesus, Thou art standing
Outside the fast-closed door,
In lowly patience waiting
To pass the threshold o'er;

Shame on us, Christian brethren,
His Name and Sign who bear,
Oh shame, thrice shame upon us,
To keep Him standing there."

But how does Jesus come to the door? First, He comes with a *blessing*. Good news reaches us, some pleasant thing happens to us, a little child is born to us to brighten our home, and we forget that it is Jesus who has sent us these good things. We rejoice over the child, we revel in the good fortune, but we forget Jesus, we leave Him outside our home, or our heart, the door is shut. Next, Jesus comes to the door in *time of trouble*. There is illness in the house. Some dear one lies tossing on a sick bed, and we watch the flushed face, and the wild, sad eyes, and we send for a doctor, but we forget Jesus outside the fast-closed door. He has come to teach us by the lessons of that sorrow, He has come to soften our hearts now that they are full of grief, but we will not open the door.

Again, Jesus comes to the door in the *voice of conscience*. We hear a whisper, which says, "Do what is right, give up this sin," and we will not listen, we will not open the door because we don't want to do right. Jesus comes to the door of our heart at Holy Baptism, and says, "Follow me." He comes at Holy Confirmation, and says, "Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you,"—and still the door is shut and barred. Barred with what? There is the bar of our

foolish *pride* which shuts out the meek Jesus. There is the bar of our *passionate temper* which shuts out the gentle Jesus. There is the bar of our *angry tongue*, which shuts out that Jesus who, when He was reviled, reviled not again. There is the bar of our *selfishness* which shuts out Jesus who pleased not Himself. There is the bar of our *impure lust* which shuts out the pure Jesus ; and there is the bar of our *cold indifference* which shuts out the burning love of Jesus. Others come and knock, and we open readily to them. Pleasure comes, crowned with roses, and we open gladly the door of welcome, but shut it against Jesus who comes crowned with thorns. Wealth comes with hands laden with gold and silver, and we open the door quickly, but we shut it against those Hands which are pierced and bleeding. Oh ! let us think on these things now. Think, even while I speak, is it not true of some of you, that the door of your house, of your heart is fast shut and barred against Jesus ? Picture him standing there outside the door. Picture the blood falling drop by drop from that wounded brow ; think to yourself, the thorn of my *pride* caused that drop ;—the thorn of my foolish cruel tongue caused that drop ; the thorn of my selfish angry temper caused that drop. See how patiently He waits. For years He has waited for *you*, and has knocked again and again at the close-shut door. In childhood He came, and found the door barred with careless pleasure ; in youth He came, and found the door barred with thoughtless frivolity ; in middle age

He came, and lo ! the door was shut, and barred with worldliness ; in old age He came and knocked, and no man opened unto Him : the door was barred with the iron of selfishness. Jesus has been speaking to you for years, He is speaking to you now, saying—“Come to Me, come to Me, I died for thee ! I come to save thee, I come to be thy Friend, thy Helper, open unto Me !”

Oh, my brothers, shall we keep the door longer shut against our Saviour ? Let us go down on our knees now, those who are in earnest, those who can hear the Saviour knocking at the door of their hearts. Let us search for the sin which bars the door, which shuts out Jesus. We think so lightly of our sins, many of us, as though they were trifles at the most. Many of us have never learned to see our sins as David did, and to pour out our very hearts in sorrow and repentance. Some of you are thinking now perhaps, “I am not so good as I ought to be, I know that, but I don’t know that I am worse than others.” That means you think you are very well as you are, and that you will take your chance. That means that you have not seen your sins. If you were to take a glass of water from a pond, it would appear pure and fair enough to the naked eye. But if you look at that water through a microscope, you would see that it was full of hideous animal forms, all struggling with each other, and devouring one another.

Look at your lives now, my brethren, be true, use the

microscope of self-examination, is all fair and pure within? Are there no secret places in your lives which you keep locked up—hidden from father, or mother, or wife, or husband? Now be honest with yourselves. Some of you perhaps are deceiving yourselves about your sins, you have not learned to see them in their true colours. A woman lately said to me, during a mission, “I never knew I was a thief till last Tuesday!” Frequently people come to me during a mission, and begin by saying they are not so good as they might be, and wish to lead a better life; and they soon become quite contented with this vague, general resolution, without going into the causes which keep them back from God. Many such have been helped to find out some deadly sin, which at first they had no intention of mentioning. I dare say some of you who hear me now are wishing that you could lead better lives. But wishing alone will not help you, wishing to get over a rough, toilsome road, won’t carry us on our journey. Sometimes you hear people declare how they wish they could have lived in the old days, and have seen Jesus on the earth, yet these people never draw near with faith, and see Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament, they are content with *wishing*. Others say, they wish they were wealthy, that they might build a Church, or endow a Bishopric; but when the offertory is collected, they give nothing at all, or the least possible sum, they are satisfied with *wishing* to do right. Do you remember what Abner said to the elders of Israel before they acknowledged

David as their King. For more than seven years after Saul's death only Judah accepted David as King, till at length Abner said to the elders of Israel, "Ye sought in times past for David to be king over you, now then do it."

My brothers and sisters, some of you are *wishing* to have Jesus Christ to be King over you, to rule in your hearts, to direct, sanctify, and govern both your hearts and minds in the ways of the law, and the works of His commandments, you know that you would be happier, purer, holier people if, instead of saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us," you were to say, "Come to my heart, Lord Jesus, be my King." Well then, do not stop short at wishing, if you would ask Jesus to be your King, "*now then do it.*" Yes, *now*; your King cometh unto you, He is standing outside the fast-closed door, do you wish Him to enter? "*Now then do it.*" Determine by God's help, to give up the sin which bars the door against Jesus your King. As long as that bar is there, Jesus will not come to you. Do not be satisfied with wishing for a better life. Do not say, I wish I could break with these bad companions; I wish I could give up that bad habit; I wish I could give up swearing, or telling bad stories, or frequenting the tavern. If you do *really* wish this, "*Now then do it.*" Be brave, and give up for Christ's sake what you know to be wrong. Determine *now*. But you say, there is so much wrong with me, I wish I were a better man, then Jesus would come

to me. My friends, do not stop till you are better, you never can be better till Jesus comes to you. If you were to go into a dark room, where the shutters were close shut on a sunshiny day, you would not say, "I'll let the darkness go away before I open the windows and door." No, you would throw open the windows and door, and let in the sunshine, and there would be no more darkness. "Now then do it." Open the door of your heart to Jesus Christ, cast down the bar of pride, or coldness, or self-righteousness, which has been shutting Jesus out. Go down on your knees now, and tell Jesus about your sin. Confess to Him that other lords have been rulers over you. The world, the flesh, the devil, sinful lusts and pleasures, have found the home of your heart swept and garnished for them, now ask Jesus to come and reign in your heart, and cast out those usurpers. Say to the dear Lord now, "So long I have shut Thee out of my heart, out of my home, O forsake me not utterly ! I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof, but at last with shame and sorrow I open now the door—enter, dear Jesus, and abide with me, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. Forgive my former coldness, remember not past years" Oh ! speak to Jesus now from your hearts, and He will come to you like sunshine flowing into a darkened room. Your eyes will be opened to see your sin, and you will be able to cry, "Whereas I was blind, *now I see.*" Hear what Jesus promises, "If any man hear my voice, and open the

door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me." O blessed assurance of pardon ! If we open the door of our hearts to Jesus, if we repent truly of our old sin, He will come in to us, and we shall sup with Him. Here in His Holy Church, here at the Blessed Altar, He will give us His Flesh and Blood, saying, " My Flesh is meat indeed, and my Blood is drink indeed." Yes, here for a time shall we feast with Him by Faith, and hereafter be partakers in Heaven of such good things as pass man's understanding.

I have read a legend of two little children, who loved God's holy Church, and spent most of their time within its walls, engaged, like the child Samuel, in pious offices. After a while they noticed that a Stranger Child was often with them, One whose Face and Form they knew not. The children asked the Priest of the Church who their companion was, and he, surprised at their story, bade them ask the Stranger to let them sup with Him. They did so one day, and the Stranger Child answered, " You shall sup with me on Thursday." Now it was Holy Week, and when the people came to Church early in the morning of Thursday, they saw the two children lying dead^b on the Altar steps, clasped in each other's arms. The holy Child, Jesus, had kept His promise, " If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

SERMON XXI.

THE MESSAGE OF THE BELLS.

ROM. X. 18.

"Their sound went into all the earth."

These words were spoken of the message of the Gospel which was to be preached to every creature, but I think we may venture to use them in reference to our church bells. It is true of every Christian country, that of all sounds the music of church bells is most familiar. In the streets of London, full of activity and money-getting, and hurry, and excitement, is heard the sound of church bells, so calm, so gentle, so different from the other sounds around us, and yet heard above all, bringing a message of life and death, a message high and solemn, above the sordid

traffic, and sin and selfishness of the street. I have often been struck with this contrast when walking in the street towards S. Paul's Cathedral.

All around are the sights and sounds of life, the merry laugh, the careless jest, the sob of sorrow, the cry of a broken heart. One great crowd is passing eastward, another westward, all are intent on the things of this life,—that work, that speculation, that pleasure, that sin! Suddenly the bells of S. Paul's begin to chime, calm, and clear and musical, above all, calling our thoughts away from the rush of the outside world, to that peace which the world cannot give. And not only in the busy towns and quiet country places of England do the voices of church bells come. In far off lands where lately the heathen knelt before his idols, is heard the sound of the church-going bell. Beneath southern palm and northern pine, the same sweet sound rings out—"the music of the Gospel leads us home." For many years I ministered in a little Mission Church by the waterside, and when we had visited one of the emigrant ships which so often anchored off our mission wharf, and had spoken words of comfort and warning to the people, the mission bells chimed forth a farewell, and the ship as she went her way would dip her flag in answer to the bells. And so as the emigrants left the old country with the message of the Gospel in their hearts, and the music of church bells in their ears, it might be truly said of the bells that "their sound went into all the earth."

But now let us think of our own church bells. They have a message for all,

"In sorrow or sadness,
In pleasure and gladness,
Now softly stealing,
Now loudly pealing,
The bells have a message for all."

They are preachers lifted up on high, near Heaven, and they send forth their voice, yea, and that a mighty voice. Oh ! that we who have ears to hear would hear ! It was a common practice in olden times to give names to bells ; sometimes they were called after some Saint, sometimes after one who had given them to the church. Let us think of some good names for our bells, which may help us to understand their message better. Let us call the first bell *Faith*, and the second bell *Hope*, and the third bell *Charity*, and the fourth *Prayer*, the fifth *Praise*, and the sixth *Thanksgiving*. Let the first bell bid us to have faith in God ; faith in the love and mercy of the Father, faith in the salvation of the Son, faith in the help and comfort of the Holy Ghost. When the dark times of trouble come, when our eyes are blinded by tears, in the evil days when the sun and the light, and the moon and the stars are darkened, and the clouds return after the rain ; when all things seem wrong with us, "and all the foundations of the earth are out of course," then listen to the bell's message,—"have faith in God, He will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, all things work together for good, for those who fear God,—have faith in God."

Let the second bell bring to you a message of hope, let it whisper :—

“ Why restless, why cast down my soul,
 Hope still and thou shalt sing
 The praise of Him who is thy God,
 Thy health's eternal spring.”

Let the bell teach you to help yourselves, and to hope on for better times ; let it warn you that life is real and earnest, not to be spent in doubting and fearing, and murmuring, but in earnest endeavours strengthened by faith, and brightened by hope. And let the third bell speak to you of Charity, of love ; of God's love for us, and the love which we ought to have for Him, and for each other. You know that if the bells are not rung in proper time and tune, the result is a discord, an ugly, distracting noise. So it is with men and women in a parish. Unless they live in harmony, *in tune with one another*, the whole place is filled with discord, with jangling and wrangling, and unlovely sounds. Well, let the third bell speak to you of love, and let all the bells speak of harmony in your lives. “ Behold how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity.” Try to rule your temper, try to restrain your tongue, and to keep from saying unkind things one of another. Let the message of the bell be to you, “brethren love one another, for God is love.” The fourth bell speaks of Prayer. Daily that bell summons you to pray in God's Holy Church, and reminds you of your prayers at home. My Friends, does not that daily prayer bell sound often as

a reproach to some of you, who, living quite close to the church, could so easily come to pray here every day, if you chose? Do you think it is enough to pray to God in Church on Sundays? God's Church is not a *Sunday Church*, it is a place of prayer and praise for every day. Believe me, you would be better, and gentler, and holier, and happier people if you were to give up a few minutes to God every day in Church. You would go forth to your work, and find it come all the easier, because God's blessing would be on it, you would find your temptations easier to conquer, because you had prayed about them. A friend of mine was once at the University boat-race with many other Clergymen, and they were cheering the Oxford boat which was ahead; a man in the crowd seeing this, said, "Ah! the religious people always win!" What he said perhaps as a sneer, was the actual truth. Religious people always do win in running the race which is set before them.

If you really believed in the power of prayer, you would lose no opportunity of praying to God. I wish you could have taken part in an Intercession Service which I was lately holding during a mission. I had asked those people who had any requests to make for prayer, to write their petitions on a slip of paper, and to put it in a box at the Church door. Well, I received so many papers, that I was obliged to hold the service three times instead of once. Each person in the vast congregation was praying not only for himself, but for every one else; and as the piteous

petition went up for old men and maidens, young men and children, for sorrowful sinners, for widows and orphans, for the sick and suffering, the prayer came forth from that kneeling crowd as from one voice,—“hear us Holy Jesu !” Those people believed in prayer. Let me tell you a story of intercessory prayer. There was once in the old days a famous mission preacher, whenever he preached he was accompanied by a little blind boy, his brother. As the great preacher stood on chancel step, or in pulpit, and the people wept or trembled at his words, close by would be the blind child, with his sightless eyes turned upward, as though watching his brother. One night the preacher saw a vision in Church, he thought an angel touched him and pointed to the blind boy. Then he saw a stream of light from Heaven shining on the sightless eyes, and he understood now that it was not the eloquence of the preacher, but the prayers of the blind child which wrought such wonderful results.

My brethren, pray for one another, and when the bell calls, say with truth, “I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the House of the Lord.”

The last two bells speak to us of Praise and Thanksgiving. They cry to you “praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.” For this they summon you to Church. Remember it is not so much the fact of your coming to Church, as the *reason why* you come, which is important. It were better for us to be away from

Church, than to be there for a wrong reason. Unless you come to worship God present here, with holy fear and reverence, your presence in Church is useless, and even sinful. Your being present in Church is worthless if you have left your heart behind. Do you think that when God sees lounging, it may be sleeping, bodies in Church, careless faces, or lips which never open in prayer and praise, He accepts those things as Service, and that with such service He is well pleased? Not so. If you come to Church at all, come from a right motive, come to give glory to God, the honour due unto His Name. Try to think less of yourselves in Church, and more of God. You who are Communicants, who have found strength and peace and joy at that Altar, remember that there especially your praises and thanksgivings should be given to Jesus, there so very near to you.

But the bells have other uses besides that of calling us to worship. They ring a merry peal for those whom Holy Church has made one. Ah! my friends, I only wish that marriages always continued as they began, sanctified by holy words, and musical with happy bells. Too often we see married life made miserable by selfishness, by ill-temper, by want of forbearance and love. There is no music in them, only the discord of passion, "like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh." Believe me, only those marriages are blessed which begin and continue in God. In these miserable days of civil marriages at registrar's offices, people seem to have forgotten what *Holy*

Matrimony means. I say only those marriages are blessed which “are undertaken soberly, reverently, and in the fear of God.” Those marriages which are defiled by lust, and undertaken from motives of necessity, or shame, can have no blessing on them.

And once more, there is the message of the death bell. Be we never so careless and thoughtless now, the time *must* come when the bell will toll for our death, and that service be read in which we can take no part. Many a time you have heard the death bell toll for others, has it never brought a warning to *you*? you who are living carelessly, it may be in sin, is there no warning for you in that tolling bell, which seems to say, “it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment?” If in life the message of the Church-going bell has been disregarded, the death bell will be for us as the bell of doom, each clang will seem to utter the sentence, “too late, too late!”

There stands at Boscastle, over-looking the wild Atlantic, a Church whose tower is known as the Silent Tower of Bottreaux. It has always stood silent, whilst the neighbouring Church of Tintagel, has a musical peal of bells.

Long years ago a peal of bells was cast for Bottreaux Church, and a ship sailed with them for the Cornish coast. The vessel came within sight of the shore, and as the pilot heard the sound of his native Tintagel bells ringing over the sea, they seemed to his ears to say—

"Come to thy God in time,
Youth, manhood, old age past,
Come to thy God at last."

The pilot knelt down on the deck, and thanked God for their safe journey; but the captain roughly bade him thank the good ship and her captain at sea. Suddenly the vessel struck on a rock and all except the pilot went down in the sight of shore. The bells which were to have hung in Bottreaux tower were buried many a fathom deep, and now when the storm rages on that wild coast, the legend says that men can hear the sound of the buried bells bringing the message,—

"Come to thy God in time,
Youth, manhood, old age past,
Come to thy God at last."

My brothers, when the death bell tolls for you and me, may it be said with truth, "So He giveth His beloved sleep."

SERMON XXII.

A SONG OF REDEMPTION.

PSALM CVII. 2.

" Let them give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed, and delivered from the hand of the enemy."

THERE is no song so joyful as that of the captive set free. The bird escaped from its cage sings the blithest of any in the woodland ; the prisoner whose chains are struck off, or whose prison door is open, knows the sweetest of all joy, the joy of freedom. This hundred and seventh Psalm is the song of captives set free, of exiles going home. It was the song of Israel when the news came that their captivity was over, and that they were to weep no more beside the waters of Babylon. Cyrus had published a decree giving the people permission to return.

to their own land, and rebuild the temple of their God and the words of the Psalm point to the time when the people were assembling from every part of the Empire of Cyrus, probably to Babylon, to prepare for the homeward march.

How the old men and maidens, the young men and children must have rejoiced together! At first the news must have seemed too good to be true. Well might Israel say, "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, then were we like unto them that dream." Could it be that they were free; that they should see once more the wild hills of Judah, and walk round Sion, and mark well her bulwarks? Should they really see again the hills that stand round about Jerusalem; should the sturdy mountaineer once again look on his native Bethlehem, and watch the fields white with harvest round the House of Bread? Might the fisher delight his eyes again with the bright waters of the sea of Galilee? It must have appeared like a dream, even as it seemed a dream to Peter when the angel opened his prison door. But when the news was confirmed, when on all sides the people were saying—"Father, mother, we are going home. Children, you shall see the home of your fathers, your feet shall stand in thy courts, O Jerusalem,"—then Israel broke forth into singing, "Then was their mouth filled with laughter, and their tongue with joy," then they sang a song of deliverance, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious and His mercy endureth for ever; let them give thank-

whom the Lord hath redeemed, and delivered from the hand of the enemy, and gathered them from all lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south."

Now I look away from the Jew singing his song of redemption, and I look at the Christian singing his song of redemption. This Psalm was of course written for the Jews, but it is just as precious to the Christian. The Jews sang a song of deliverance from Babylon, the strange land of captivity ; we sing of our redemption from the dark land of sin and death, "since the Lord hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up a mighty salvation for us ; and He hath devised means that His banished be not expelled from Him." Every word of this Psalm applies to the Christian Church. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious, and His mercy endureth for ever." Is not that true for us? Is not the Lord gracious to us to-day, though we have rebelled against Him, and have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, and offended against His holy laws, and done those things which we ought not to have done, and left undone those things which we ought to have done? The Lord has not forgotten to be gracious ; the same gracious Lord Who lay in the rude manger among the hills at Christmas-time, Who fasted in the desert, Who died on the cross, Who rose from the sweet Easter garden, loves us and helps us to-day. This same Jesus Who said to the weak woman "go, and sin no

more," says the same to us feeble folk to-day. This same Jesus Who opened the blind man's eyes long ago, says to us blind people to-day, "receive thy sight." This same Jesus Who cheered the dying thief, says to the dying Christian now, "to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

The world has changed, countries and manners and customs have changed, but sin and sorrow remain the same, and "the old, old fashion that came in with our first garments, and will last unchanged until our race has run its course, and the wide firmament is rolled up like a scroll, the old, old fashion—death." And Jesus remains unchanged, to help the sinner, to comfort the sorrowful, to raise up the dead. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious, and His mercy endureth for ever."

Now look at this Psalm again. "Let them give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed, and delivered from the hand of the enemy, and gathered them from all lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south." Is not this true of us? Whom hath He redeemed but His holy Catholic Church, at the price of His precious blood; the one Church over all the earth, though gathered out of all lands into one fold, where the Lord maketh men to be of one mind in an house, "Where there is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Yes, Jesus has gathered His redeemed

out of all lands ; from the east, the land of dawn, He has redeemed the little child just entering into life. From the west, the land of the setting sun, He hath redeemed the dying patriarch. From the cold frozen north He hath redeemed those who were living in ‘the winter of their discontent,’ and from the south land, or the land of the troubled sea, He hath redeemed those who were tossed to and fro by storm and tempest.

But this Psalm is not only true of the Church at large, it is true of its individual members. It is true of you and me, and I want you to take its truths to your hearts, and to be able to say, “Is it not true that Jesus hath redeemed *me*, and delivered *me* from the hand of the enemy ?” Is it not true of each of you that the Lord is gracious now, and that His mercy has endured for you in spite of your many sins against Him ? Jesus has not only redeemed you once by dying on the cross for your sins, and by rising again for your justification, but He is your Redeemer *now*, and will gather you out of all lands. He will gather you out of *the gloomy sad land of trouble and sorrow*. From that land where your feet stick fast in the deep mire, and where you are weary of crying, and your throat is dry, and your tears have been your meat day and night, Jesus will redeem you, and you shall say with holy David, “I cried unto the Lord in my trouble, and He heard me.” My brethren, there is only one who can gather us out of the dark land of sorrow, even He Who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. I don’t say you

shall not know sorrow in this land which is very far off from home ; but I *do* say you shall have strength to bear it, and that your sorrow shall be turned into joy. Jesus is, we know, the Conqueror of death, yet death comes to every home. One of the greatest sorrows which we have to bear is to see our dear one fade away as a flower ; to miss the merry laugh and the kindly voice and the cheery smile ; to find all our interest centered in one room, the sick room ; to watch the doctor's face growing graver and graver day by day ; to look up to Heaven for one bit of blue sky to cheer us, and to find the skies darker day by day ; to notice the whispers of friends and their pitying glances ; to be called to the bedside, and to hear from the dear one's lips the fatal sentence—"I must leave you, our pleasant days here are over, I am going on the long journey, God bless you, farewell ;" to watch the awful change as death lays his hand on the sweet face, and the light fades out of the eyes ; to see the blinds drawn down, and to find the house hushed and silent, as the form in which we delighted is borne for the last time over the threshold ; to feel the home blank and empty ; as

"There cometh a mist, and a weeping rain,
And the world is never the same again."

— all this is hard indeed, and without Jesus it would be unbearable. But, my friends, all is not dark if Jesus be with you. He will teach you to look beyond the grave. He will bid you not to seek the living among the dead. He will show you that death has come to your dear one

as the angel came to the Apostle of old, opening his prison door, and bidding him arise and follow. Above the sob of sorrow you shall hear the voice of Jesus whispering, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, the maiden is not dead but sleepeth." And you will know that your lost one, as you wrongly call her, is not lost, but is just as near to you as ever ; loving, and feeling, and caring for you as of old. The body is safe beneath the flowers of God's acre, the soul is safe in the Paradise of God. The whisper of the Redeemer comes to you once more. "Thy brother—thy sister shall rise again. O believe me, Jesus will gather you out of the sad land of sorrow.

Again, Jesus will gather us *from the misty land of doubt*. The Christian knows in whom he has believed, there is no doubt about the matter for him. The heathen of old asked. "What is truth?" and got no answer. Many of them had a longing for a clearer light, for better, purer views of life, and knew not where to turn. The poorest child to-day, who can look up faithfully into Heaven, and say, "Our Father," is better off than Zeno, or Socrates, or the wisest of them all. Too often in these days we find people refusing to believe, because they are *afraid* to believe. There is something wrong in their own lives, and they fear to believe God's sentence on their sin ; just as the man who has ruined his health is afraid to meet the doctor, who will pronounce his doom. We who believe should pray for those who do not. We know

not what wonderful results may come from an earnest prayer for another. I heard lately of a farmer who had tried hard to convince a certain blacksmith in his parish, who was living a Godless life, and sneering at religion. The farmer seemed to make no impression on the man, yet he persevered. One day he prayed very earnestly that he might be able to convince the blacksmith, and started full of hope, thinking over what he would say. When he found himself in the man's presence, the farmer found that he could say nothing to the purpose, in spite of all his trying, so he only shook the blacksmith's hand, saying, "I am very anxious about your soul," and turned away disappointed. The blacksmith was struck by the earnestness and reality of the farmer's manner, and going to his wife, he said, "If the farmer is so anxious about my soul, it's time that I was anxious about it myself." The man began to think, and in time began to pray. Thus the farmer's prayer, which seemed all wasted, bore fruit in the end.

But again, Jesus will gather us *out of the black midnight land of sin*. Yet we see sin in every hideous form around us, the newspapers are full of stories of crime, and the misery which comes from crime. There are sins too which are never mentioned in the newspapers, sins in high places, but none the less vile, since sin in satin and sin in fustian is just as ugly. The streets of our great cities were never so shameful at night as they are now, and heathen Rome, or Pompeii, were little worse, if worse

at all, than Christian London. If we look into the country, we see men and women sinning against purity, and bringing up their children as shameless as themselves, living without God in the world, and never mentioning Him, except to blaspheme His Name, and speaking cruelly and spitefully of their neighbours. When we see these things, and we do see them every day, we are tempted to ask, can it be true that Jesus *has* redeemed, and will redeem us out of the land of sin? Yes, it is quite true, in spite of the prevalence of sin. These sinners against their own souls won't accept redemption. Remember Jesus won't save you against your will. If a kindly man were to pay a price for a slave, and redeem him from a cruel master, and make him free, and if the slave refused his redemption, and chose to remain with his master, then the price of his redemption would be useless. So Jesus offers you freedom, and offers to deliver you from the slavery of the task-master Satan, having paid for you with the price of His Blood; but if you won't accept His offer, if you prefer the slavery of sin to the glorious freedom of the sons of God, it is your own fault. If a man sick of a deadly disease refuses to follow the physician's advice, the doctor is useless. In spite of the advance of medical science, thousands of people die annually of curable diseases, because they will sin against the laws of health and purity. So thousands live and die in sin, because they won't do what Jesus, the Good Physician bids them

The man who thinks there is nothing the matter with him can get no good from the doctor. And the man who knows there *is* something wrong with him, yet will not follow advice, is in the same position. Now there are some of two classes of people probably here now, who get no good from the redemption of Jesus Christ. There are the self-righteous people, who are blind to their sins, whose eyes Satan has closed, and who think they have no need of pardon. These will not go to Jesus, and find redemption out of the dark, desert land of sin. Then there are the people who know that they are on the wrong road, yet will not turn back. Their conscience speaks to them in vain. Like the crowd at Calvary, they look on the crucified Saviour, and turn away to their own homes, and their old evil way. For you who see no need of a Saviour because you don't see your sin; and for you who don't see your need of a Saviour, because you don't want to give up your sin, the redemption of Jesus is useless. If you choose to remain in the prison-house, when Jesus offers to open the door, if you choose to be slaves, when you may be free, then your doom is of your own making. There are many of you, I trust, to whom the Lord has been gracious, He has shown you the wickedness of your sin, and you have through the grace of repentance found pardon and peace. A friend of mine told me that whilst assisting in the London Mission, he endeavoured to bring to the Service a fallen woman from the notorious dancing rooms close to the Church. The

woman came dressed in the showy livery of her sin, carrying a little lap dog under her arm. The service seemed to produce no effect on her, and she left. Entering a cab at the Church door, she had only gone a few yards when a collision took place, in which the little dog was killed. Within five minutes of her leaving the Church, the woman had returned, and flinging herself on her knees before the Missioner, in the sight of all the people, she cried, “O save me, save me *now!*” At the moment of danger and of threatened death, her eyes were opened, and she longed to be redeemed out of the prison of her old life.

O you who know that you have sinned, and done wickedly; who have wandered in the wilderness out of the way, the dry, barren land of sin where no water is; and have found no city to dwell in, no home of peace and rest; who have been hungry and thirsty, because you have fed on husks instead of on the Bread of Life; who have sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being fast bound in misery and iron; in the darkness of sin, where no light from Heaven comes, in the shadow of the death of sin here, which ends in the death eternal; fast bound in misery,—for say what you will the way of transgressors *is* hard,—and in the iron of your own iron will; Oh! cry unto the Lord in your trouble, and He will deliver you out of your distress. He will lead you by the right way, the way of repentance, which will conduct you to the way of holiness, and the city of peace. He will

bring you out of darkness into light, and will break your bonds in sunder. Those who, like the woman in the Gospel, Satan hath bound, lo, these forty years, shall be made free. O friends, those of you who are in earnest now, call unto the Lord while He is near, and He will send His word and heal you; and "the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads;" and you whom Jesus hath redeemed shall learn "to praise the Lord for His goodness, and to declare the wonders that He doeth for the children of men."

SERMON XXIII.

A COMMON SIN.

S. LUKE xiv. 18.

"And they all with one consent began to make excuse.

THE making of idle excuses is the oldest, as it is the commonest of sins. It began with Adam in Paradise, and ever since that time men have, more or less, continued with one consent to make excuse. When a man does wrong, instead of getting to his Lord right humbly, and confessing his sin, and finding pardon, he begins to excuse himself. The devil takes the honest confession out of his mouth, and puts an idle excuse there. Truly says the Italian proverb, "He that does amiss never lacks excuse ;" and Shakespeare writes—

'Oftentimes excusing of a fault
Doth make the fault the worse by the excuse.'

Let us look at some of these excuses fairly in the face. You have made them over and over again, either openly, or to your own hearts and consciences.

Some people try to deceive others with excuses, some try to deceive themselves, but no one ever yet deceived God, "To Whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid."

First, let us look at some excuses which people make for putting off repentance. Very few people would be bold enough to say that they have absolutely nothing to repent of. If you begin to think for a minute, while I speak, you will remember something not quite right in your life; something which you have done which you ought not to have done, or something neglected which you ought to have done, or something which you have said in a moment of passion or irritation which is wrong, not true, or unjust, or cruel. Or you will remember some thought, secret, unknown to all except God and yourself, which is wrong, impure, unclean, or false, or deceitful. Think now, while I speak. Can you remember none of these things? You can, I feel sure. You admit that all is not right with you. Then why do you not repent, and amend your lives? Because you have got into the bad habit of making excuses. The devil, who would keep you in slavery, holds you back, and puts

an idle excuse in your mind. He does not tell you that you must not repent, he is careful not to frighten his victims by appearing in his true colours, so he urges you to *put off repentance*. Thus when a man is asked why he does not repent, his answer is, "I intend to repent, but just now I have no time, my business occupies me so fully." Yes, "*repent, but not now*," is the devil's advice, whereas the voice of God says, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." If a drunkard were to say, that after another week of excess he would reform ; or if a thief were to promise, that having made a certain sum of money by robbery, he would become honest, would you believe in their repentance? So with those who put off repentance from day to day, it is not real. They love the taste of their sin too well to leave it, they want to fill their pockets with the stolen fruit of the world before they turn back to Paradise. The devil often deceives people in the very matter of repentance, leading people to think they are penitent when they are not. Wherever there is much good money, there is sure to be some bad, so Satan gives us idle excuses, base metal, instead of the honest gold of true repentance. My brethren, don't trifle with God. It is an awful act of sin and presumption to say, "*I ought to repent, and I will by-and-by, but not now*." Let me tell you of a story of repentance delayed too long. During a mission held some years ago, a lady was much impressed by the services, and one night, when she had come home from Church, she wrote on a piece of paper

these words, "I determine to give myself to God this day six months." Afterwards she put her pen through the words *six*, and substituted *three*. Presently that word was altered, and the writing stood thus, "I determine to give myself to God this day month." That very night her soul was required of her ! she died, and she had not repented, and the terrible proof lay in her own handwriting on the dressing table. Now listen to the story of one who repented late, but in time. During the London Mission, a lady, one of the Church workers in a certain parish, noticed a young girl lingering one night by a Church door, where the mission service was about to commence. She invited the girl to enter, but she excused herself on the plea that she had no Bible. The lady offered her own, and accompanied the girl into Church, where she was evidently much affected. On leaving the Church, the lady begged her companion to accept the Bible, in which her own name was written, and the girl passed out of her sight. Next morning the lady visited a hospital, where she was accustomed to read to the patients, and a nurse informed her that they had a Bible bearing her name, which had been brought in on the previous night. The young girl, after leaving the mission service, had been run over, and taken mortally injured to the hospital, carrying the Bible with her. She died the same night, and her dying words were these, "Thank God, it was not before last night." A preacher once told his hearers to be sure to repent the day before they died. When

one of the hearers objected that a man's dying day is uncertain, the preacher bade him repent *every day*, and then he would be sure to do so the day before he died.

Another common excuse for delaying repentance is this, "I am no worse than others." I was speaking lately to a mother about the sin of her daughter, and she excused her on the plea that she was no worse than others in a higher position, and instanced a lady who had sinned in the same way. But, my brethren, surely sin is none the less a sin because it is committed in the company of others. Whether we do wrong in solitude, or follow the multitude to do evil, the wrong remains. It would be a very foolish excuse for a drunkard to say that he was no worse than others, because there are many drunkards among us. Because your neighbour swears, or steals, or lies, that is no excuse for you. We all have the same pattern for our life, the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not for us to say, "I am no worse than others," but to ask whether we are honestly trying to follow the example of our Saviour Christ ; and if not, we have need to repent and amend at once.

Again, people excuse themselves by saying, "It is so hard to repent." But it is still harder to die in our sins, and receive the wages of sin, which is death. It is hard to give up bad habits, but it is harder still to be ruined by them. The longer we persevere in a wrong way, the

more difficult is it to get out of it. "The way of transgressors is hard," and when a sinner turns from his evil road, he cannot expect to escape from the foul path of sin without soiling his feet. But if you *want* to repent, God will help you : you cannot repent, any more than you can do anything else, without His aid. If you only really want to get out of the old bad way, Jesus will take you by the hand, and will lift you up, and strengthen the feeble knees, and the tottering feet which are just beginning to go right, and will show you that his grace is sufficient for you. But you must do your part, you must not expect your repentance to be done for you. God will not take you out of the way of sin till you wish it. Do not make idle excuses about the hardness of repentance, if you have eaten of the dead sea fruit of sin, you must expect to find a bitter taste. The slothful man, when urged to try a new path, says, "there is a lion in the way,"—but the lion is *yourself*, your own wilful, sinful temper hindering you from repentance.

Now let us look at another class of excuses which people make for staying away from Church. One of these excusers says, "Church-going will save no one." That is quite true. You may come to Church in a wrong state of mind, or from an unworthy motive, and no good will come out of it. Those who attend Church merely from habit, and are glad when the service is over ; those who behave irreverently, whispering, or laughing in the very presence of God ; those who are so indifferent that

they sleep through the service, or never take any part in it, either in prayer or praise, these people get no good, rather positive harm by Church-going. Attendance at Church is a *means* of Grace, not Grace itself. If rightly used it is a means of placing us in the way of salvation, and of keeping us there. If you get into a railway carriage at the Station, the mere act of doing so will not take you to London, but if you do not first get in, the train cannot carry you there.

Another self-excuser says, “Church-going is a mere form and show; pure religion is not outside, but inside one.” It is perfectly true that pure religion is inside, and not outside. But surely we must show outside what we feel inside. Suppose that your landlord were to reduce your rent twenty per cent. because of the bad times, and were to give your children a handsome present as well, you would, I think, go up to his house to thank him, and you would not consider it a mere show. You would not leave him to imagine the gratitude inside you. Well, one of the chief reasons why we come to Church is to thank God for His goodness, and to openly declare “the wonders that He doeth for the children of men.”

Listen to another excuse. “There are too many forms and ceremonies in Church for me, too much standing up and sitting down, and ringing of bells, I can say my prayers quietly at home when I feel inclined.” Now listen, most of you are employed at the great house here,

or by the farmers. Some of you may have seen a factory or cotton mill in other parts of the country. Well, you know that there are regular times for beginning and ending work, a bell rings to summon you to meals, and every man and woman has a certain portion of work appointed for each day. But supposing that every one were to do as his fancy led him ; supposing that at eleven o'clock in the morning, in the midst of cutting a lawn, or rubbing down a horse, or working at a spindle, a man were to say "I think I shall go and get some dinner, I feel inclined for it ;" would it be possible for the work of that estate, or that factory to go on ? Of course not ; yet the habit of saying your prayers, or attending to religion at odd times, when the fancy takes you, is very much the same as snatching food at irregular hours, without plan, or order. No system can go on without system and plan, and those who tell us they can say their prayers without being warned by a bell, generally forget to say them at all.

"But," argues another self-excuser, "Sunday is a day of rest, I work hard all the week, I like to rest on Sunday." Yes, Sunday is a day of rest from everyday work, the same God who gives you work to do, and strength to do it, gives you rest on His day. But sloth and selfish indulgence are not rest. The man who lies in bed half Sunday, and rises only to eat and drink, is simply dis honouring God and himself. There is never an excuse for sloth. If we really love God we should find the truest rest in the worship of His Church. The true

meaning of all these idle excuses is just this, *people do not love God*. When we truly love any one we like to be in his company, to do as he wishes; so if we really love God, we should be able to say with truth, “I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the House of the Lord.”

But again, there comes the pitiful excuse, “Sunday was so wet and stormy, I could not come to Church.” But Saturday is often just as wet and stormy, yet no one stayed away from market. The food was bought and sold for the body, that body which will be in the Church-yard before long, and the soul which lives for ever was starved, because it rained!

Another tells us, “I live such a long way from Church.” That is indeed a disadvantage, but you never find the road too long to the town and the shops, and the distance is never too great from your work.

Another meets us with the old, old plea, “I was not very well on Sunday.” It is a curious fact that more people are unwell on Sunday than on any other day of the week. They are quite able to attend to business on Saturday, and are quite fresh, and ready for work on Monday, but they are poorly on Sunday. I am afraid the disease is one of the will, rather than the body. There is no will to come to Church, and consequently there is no way. Yes, the secret of all these excuses is that some of us love ourselves better than God. We take all we

can get from God's hand, and give Him nothing in return.

I will only speak of one more excuse, as common as it is foolish. "I don't go to Church myself," says a man, "but my wife goes." So much the better for the wife, so much the worse for the husband. You cannot do your duty by deputy, and you cannot save your soul by deputy. Every one of us must answer for himself. There is an old legend of a man who never attended Church, but whose wife went regularly. Both died, and when they came to the gates of Paradise, the woman passed in. But when the husband presented himself, the keeper of the gate said, "Your wife worshipped God for both of you, now she has gone into Paradise for both of you, you cannot enter here." My friends, you who have been trying to excuse yourselves from doing what is right, think on these things.

SERMON XXIV.

WHAT SOCIETY WANTS.

PROVERBS XII. 19.

“The lip of Truth shall be established for ever.”

IT is remarkable, if we study the Bible with the words and works of the world around us acting as a commentary, how wonderfully unpractical the inspired writers of Scripture appear. Here we have Solomon, the type of wisdom, and of worldly wisdom too, speaking as a fool, if we judge him by nineteenth century ethics. Ask the man of business, ask the election agent, ask the advertiser, in a word, ask Society, what their code of morals is, what their shibboleth, their watchword is ; and they will not tell you that their code is Spartan in its strictness, that to have an

honest report among their fellow-gentiles is the end and aim of their toil and moil, that their shibboleth is "great is Truth and it shall prevail, Truth at any price;" no, they have, like the arithmetician, reduced the matter to its lowest terms, and their watchword, their key-note, the open sesame of their hearts is "will it pay?" Expediency is the test, it may be wrong to deceive one's neighbour in the food we sell him, and in the money transactions in which we engage him ; but it is the way of the world. If my next door neighbour adulterates his goods, and makes vast profit, why should I make a martyr of myself and lose money for the sake of knowing myself to be honest? I might be praised, but I should starve, ages ago that verdict was passed by a heathen, 'virtue is praised and starves.' No, we must go with the stream, there is a great an almost overwhelming commercial immorality about us, it is deplorable, but individuals cannot stem the current, we are no worse than our neighbours at all events. What miserable reasoning is this. Worldly wise you call it, worldly wise, but Heavenly foolish ; "no worse than our neighbours"—no, and no better, all alike tainted with the same plague spot, all alike branded in the forehead with Mammon's signet, where another name ought to be written!

By the side of such reasoning as this, Solomon may well speak as a child, as an old-world mentor out of date: if a man believes in his ledger as his gospel, and learns how to live from the money article of the newspaper, the salt of the gospel may well have lost its savor for him, and

the holy lessons which suited Jewish fishermen, or Saxon peasants, or ignorant savages may well appear obsolete to such a one. It has been lately said that had the Revelation of Jesus on earth been delayed till now, we should have failed to hail the Messiah in the carpenter's Son of Nazareth, and I believe it, had He come preaching the same unworldly and unpractical gospel ; but not because of the weakness of the Revelation. But from our own utter blindness, our own miserable want of Faith. We work round to the inevitable rock on which we make shipwreck of ourselves ; *want of faith* in the incarnate Son of God, God made flesh and dwelling among us. It was the same faithlessness, or half faith, which stayed the hands of Messiah from doing many mighty works, which mocked at Him before Pilate, which crucified Him on Calvary ; it is precisely the same want of faith, or possession of half faith which makes us believe in the world and its sins, and not in the power of Jesus, Who has overcome the world ; which makes us hold that the devil is the ruling power in men's hearts, not God, and that consequently deceit and fraud must be met by deceit and fraud, lying by lying, selfishness by selfishness. Whereas we know that Satan is but a crushed serpent, with power to wound certainly, but crushed and wounded mortally by the seed of the woman, and that instead of allowing the world to overcome us, as we do when we hold this pessimist's creed of wickedness universally being successful, we should overcome the world, overcome evil not with evil, but with

good : " and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith." And we have not this Faith, most of us ; we have some kind of faith, of course, but it is too often vague, unsatisfactory, we do not know what we believe, our Faith is a fair-weather blossom which will not stand the rough usage of a tempest. We do not make enough of the Incarnation of our Blessed Saviour; when we see men so wicked, so selfish, so utterly worldly, it staggers us, and we are half inclined to doubt the doctrine of the perfect Manhood of Jesus, a Manhood assumed in order that all men might imitate it. But if we would only believe we should see the glory of God worked out in this point, if we would only believe in the capability of man for all that is high, and holy, and noble, a capability given him through the Manhood of Jesus, if we would believe this instead of believing in man's baseness, selfishness, venality; in every man having a certain price, and no man acting from high and disinterested motives; we should then be able to counteract the low morality of the age, the world would be regenerated, society would learn to look higher for its motives, not to look to the world for its springs of action, but to seek them in that pure fountain undefiled, the Manhood of the God Christ Jesus. You tell me, and you tell me truly, that honesty, truth, strict moral dealing between man and man does not succeed : that another power, call it deceit, call it by a more common and expressive name, rules every action, and ensures success : that the lying

advertisement, and the highly-coloured account, make a commercial article sell, that in our dress, our habits, our amusements, and alas ! too often, in our religion, we are artificial, false, not what we profess to be, not truthful. You may tell me all this, and I would answer it is true, but it is not inevitable, it is because we have forsaken our first love, God, and become enamoured with the siren charms, the false Delilah-like blandishments of the world of Godless society ; men need not be hypocrites to succeed in this world, if only they would remember what they are : that a man is ‘the noblest work of God,’ that he bears the Creator’s image and superscription, that he is meant to be Godlike, God’s vicegerent on earth, and that God, whose he is, is a God of Truth. If any of you who love crooked paths, who to turn money would leave the straight, honest road, who to gain fame, or honour, or place (gone all of them in a few years) would stoop to a lie, or a perversion of the truth, remember what you are—*men* ; men for whom Christ died ; men for whom Christ left His throne in Heaven, and became obedient unto sorrow and pain and death, even the death of the Cross ; men clothed with the like humanity which Jesus wore ; men who as men may claim as a brother the Man Christ Jesus. Think of this, you men of business, and you men of pleasure, think of it, O my brothers and sisters in the Lord, think that you were made one with Christ in Baptism, that your worldly nature ought to have been buried with Him, without hope of a resurrection, since the new man

now only should be raised with Him, and then ask yourselves if it is right, if it is possible, for believers in Jesus to be fraudulent, hypocritical, false, or whether those miserable sins of Satan's sowing can flourish if men would only remember their true character, and act as Christians, as Christ's children, and not the Devil's bondmen. Society can only be regenerated when Christian men and women combine together and fight against sin ; when the Church learns that the fight is the part of the laity as well as of the clergy, when all Churchmen stand shoulder to shoulder, and overcome the evil of the world by the good of the Church, which is the holiness of the Church's Head, Christ Jesus. Are these idle dreams of mine, my brethren, cannot such things be ? Believe me, they could be, if we had but faith as a grain of mustard seed.

Whenever I look upon a multitude of people in Church, I never know whether a feeling of pleasure or of pain predominates. I think the sad thought conquers. It is a sight full of joy and encouragement to see you all assembled in God's temple, but the question comes, how much of this service is real, honest seeking after God's Truth ; the multitude is here in the body, but of how many congregations may the sad words be spoken, "this people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me?" Here is a goodly company with intelligent faces, decent attention, fair outsides : but what if the parable of the whitened sepulchres apply to us : what if the fair outsides cover dead or dying men's bones, and all

corruption ! You are here in God's House, but is love to God the motive which has brought you ? "Are your minds set upon righteousness, O ye congregation?" Are you here as fainting pilgrims, "weary with the march of life," hungering and thirsting after righteousness, or is it merely an interlude in the drama of your lives, a Sunday task, a Sunday parade ; what are the thoughts of your hearts ? If God were to echo the words of His servant Jehu, and say, "Is thine heart right, as mine heart is with thine heart ?" could each one of you, could one in twenty among you, say truly, "yes ?" Methinks as I gaze on this congregation I see as it were the vision of Ezekiel the prophet, and I feel constrained to ask as was asked of him, "Can these bones live ?" Can these bodies and souls now living, live for ever ? And in my perplexity I find comfort in the faithful prophet's modest answer, "O Lord God, Thou knowest." God knows those who are His, but we do not, and hence our great anxiety. But one thing we know, we must know it if we have ears to hear, and eyes to see, that wherever God, speaking by the mouth of Solomon and David, and all the holy men which have been since the world began, tells us that truth is the one thing to be sought as silver, and to be prized above rubies, the world speaking through the brazen mouthpiece of Society says that Truth as a fact does not answer, and practically is a mistake. It is so, my brethren, it is a mistake practically in the world, but what a world that is which makes it so ! Is it a world for Christian men

and women to live in with their hands upon their mouths? Will none take up their parable against it? Will none go forth among their fellows, men and women, as Apostles to Society? We are fond of sending District Visitors and Mission men and women to our poorer neighbours, we tell them of their faults and follies often enough, rightly so, of course; but in common reason, in common mercy to the souls of the upper class let us have Missions to them, let us ask God's blessing on the leavening of the whole lump of Society, lest the story of Dives and Lazarus be repeated over and over again; and the rich men go to their place without even hearing Him who for their sakes rose from the dead.

It is the blind obedience which Society pays to itself, its rules and customs and superstitions, which keeps it down in the dungeons of Doubting Castle, which leads it captive after the multitude to do evil. Let Society be free, free from all the myriad forms of cant, and custom, and conventionality; let its members remember their individuality, let them remember that they are individual men and women, whose religion is a personal matter, whose salvation is an individual boon; it would seem that the ideal of modern English Christianity is purely congregational; people come in crowds to Church as soldiers to Parade, they imitate one another in Church and out of Church, they pray when others pray, they believe, or think they do, what others believe; hence it is that a large congregation is more or less a sad sight, hence it is that

our worship is so utterly inconsistent : we come to Church on Sunday and leave the Church tenantless all the rest of the week.

Again, the crowd comes to Sunday Service, and the crowd goes away after the sermon; leaving the few to partake of the Blessed Sacrament: here is the second inconsistency ; why should we follow the multitude manifestly to do evil in this case? Why does not each one of us ask himself the simple question, "do not I stand in as sore need of spiritual strength as those few worshippers yonder? Do I not find the world as rough a journeying place as they, did not my Saviour give Himself for me as well as for them?" If people would ask themselves such question, and seek a satisfactory answer from God, then and then only, inconsistency in worship would disappear, then the lip of truth would make itself heard instead of the chatter of conventionality, then we should get rid of the monstrous absurdity of Churchmen and Communicants being different classes of people.

To sum up the whole matter in a few last words : is our life pitched according to the key note given by the world, by Society ? If so, it is in a false key, in too low a key, you must try a higher note ; and by so pitching it, you will draw the voice of Society after you, there may be a little discord at first, but in the end Society will rise, if the individuals rise, the mass will rise also. The morality of Society is low, because it believes in the badness of the

old Adam, and does not give credit to the perfection of manhood displayed in the second Adam. Let our part be, brethren, to regard things not from the worldling's point of view, but from the Christian, to feel that as very members incorporate of Christ's Holy Body, something more than worldliness is possible for us, that as the Man Christ Jesus triumphed over sin, fraud, lying, selfishness, so we in His strength, and by His grace may do so likewise. Believe this, and the force of Solomon's words come out: he spoke as God taught him, and he says, "the lip of truth shall be established for ever;" try the experiment, meet lying with truth, meet doubt with faith, meet deceit with frankness, meet commercial trickery with plain honesty, and verily you shall have your reward. Here, here on earth the lip of truth shall prevail and be established, for Christ is here on earth, even unto the end: and in Heaven, in God's presence, before Him Who is Truth, Who hateth a lie, can we doubt that there the lip of truth shall be established for ever? Methinks I hear some of you echo the scoffing Roman's query, 'And what is truth?' And I answer, go to the Gospel and read the life of Jesus Christ the Righteous, and you are answered. Model your ways, your works and words by Gospel precepts, not by those of Fashion, Cant, Hypocrisy, Expediency. Throw off the miserable chains of Society, stand free as individual Christians for whom Christ died, stand clothed with Faith and in your right minds. Come home like the prodigal from the far country and come to yourselves,

cast away your idols to the owls and bats, break down the Dagon of formality, stamp into powder the golden calf of Mammon, be followers of God as dear, simple, trusting children, for it is written, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

SERMONS BY THE REV. S. BARING GOULD.

VILLAGE PREACHING FOR A YEAR. By the Rev. S. BARING-GOULD. A collection of 65 specially-written Short Sermons for ALL THE SUNDAYS and CHIEF HOLY-DAYS of the Christian Year, MISSIONS, SCHOOLS, HARVEST, CLUB, etc.; with a supplement of TWENTY SERMON SKETCHES.

This most complete and excellent Series of Sermons forms a perfect storehouse of Teaching, Illustration and Anecdote for the Whole Year, and will be found an invaluable aid to the Preacher in Country Towns and Villages.

Complete in 2 vols., elegant cloth, 10/-, by post 10/7.

Vol. I. separately, from Advent to Whit-Sunday, 5/-, by post 5/4

*Vol. II. separately, Miscellaneous, from Trinity } 5/-, by post 5/4
to Advent, also 20 Sermon Sketches }*

"Thoroughly excellent, and admirably calculated to excite the interest of a village congregation, while the great doctrines of the Christian Faith are clearly and boldly set forth."—*Guardian*.

"They are exquisite, most suggestive, and among the most remarkable sermons of the day."—*Literary Churchman*.

"Sound in doctrine, vigorous and telling in expression, devout in feeling, yet abounding in illustration and anecdote."—*John Bull*.

"We strongly recommend them to the Clergy, who will gather from them many a hint how to make use of anecdote, illustration, scraps of personal experience, &c., in their pulpit teaching..... Always interesting and effective."—*Church Times*.

"Short, sketchy, and wonderfully graphic—model sermons."

—*English Churchman*,

"These brilliant sermons will be really valuable to the Clergy, they suggest innumerable novel trains of thought, and their illustrations are lavish and singularly beautiful."—*Church Quarterly*.

VILLAGE PREACHING FOR SAINTS' DAYS.

A specially-written set of 21 Short Plain Sermons for ALL THE SAINTS' DAYS. One volume, fcap. cloth, price 4/-. Uniform with the same Author's "Village Preaching for a Year," to which it in fact forms the THIRD AND COMPLETING VOLUME.

The Publishers are glad by the issue of this Volume to comply with the numerous requests they have received for the Saints' Day Sermons to complete Mr. Baring-Gould's former vols. of Village Preaching for the Sundays.

SERMONS TO CHILDREN. A specially-written

Series, Twenty-Three in number, including a Set of Six on CHILDREN'S DUTIES AND FAULTS (Tidiness, Idleness, Wilfulness, Obedience, Perseverance, Idle Talk, etc.), and also a Set of Four on the Seasons of the Year. The very practical lessons for everyday life, combined with the picturesque language, the rich store of anecdotes, and the unflagging interest of these Sermons, will render them not only useful in Church, but most valuable and instructive for School Readings, or Prizes, or for Birthday or other Home Gift Books for children of all ages and classes. Cloth, price 3/6, by post 3/10.

By the Rev. S. Barry-Gauld, (continued).

THE PREACHER'S POCKET. A Volume of Sermons. Cr 8vo, cloth, price 5/-, by post 5/4.

The Author has specially endeavoured in each one of this Collection of Sermons to provide some material really calculated to set people thinking. He trusts that they will serve the country Clergy with ideas which their own opinions of the wants of their people will enable them to adapt to even the most homely requirements.

"Will serve country clergy with ideas which they can adapt to even their humble requirements, and will prove of assistance to hard-worked town clergy, who cannot do better than take these sermons on the whole as a model for their own compositions."—*Church Times*.

"We commend most heartily these sermons, as being models of a lucid style, of poetic language, of definite arrangement and distinctness of teaching. Few books will be more helpful and suggestive to the over-worked pastors of our town parishes."—*Ecclesiastical Gazette*.

THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING. A Course of Lectures. (1. The Mystery of Suffering. 2. The Occasion of Suffering. 3. The Capacity for Suffering. 4. Suffering Educative. 5. Suffering Evidential. 6. Suffering Sacrificial) Third edition. Square crown 8vo, cloth, price 3/6, by post, 3/9.

"Striking and admirable in a very high degree. If any reader desires to find this great problem treated with boldness, and yet with reverence; with scientific knowledge of fact, and with the happy perspicuity that amounts to poetic genius, he cannot do better than seek it in these lectures."—*Literary Churchman*.

"Those who heard these sermons will welcome the opportunity now given them of again studying truths, whose nobility and depth were at the time almost obscured by the extreme beauty of the vesture in which they were clothed. Very seldom indeed are beauties, as many and varied, to be found in large folio volumes as are here united in one little book."

—*John Bull*.

By Rev. R. J. Willmet Burton.

Price 5/-, by post 5/4, A volume of **SHORT PLAIN SERMONS**.

THE LORD'S SONG, and other Plain Sermons, consisting of Twenty-Two Sermons suggested by well-known Hymns, including several for Children's Services. The Sermons mainly follow the course of the Church's Seasons. Among the Titles we may mention The Long Journey—The Bright Morning—The Dark Evening—The Warfare—The Wanderer—The True Friend.

It is hoped that these Sermons will be welcome, and useful in suggesting some novelty for Parish Preaching.

By Rev. B. G. Willmet Burton, (continued.)

**MISSION SERMONS FOR A YEAR, including
Sixty-Eight Short Plain Sermons, for every Sunday, a few
Saints' Days, Harvest, Missions, Funeral, Dedication Festival,
&c. Price 7/6, by post 8/2.**

Messrs. Skeffington believe that these specially written Sermons will be found to be characterized by the same warmif earnestness, and simplicity of style, the same originality of thought, anecdote, and idea, and by that excellent Church tone which have rendered Mr. Buxton's former Sermons at ones so interesting and so useful.

"In this volume the same beauty and vigour of language, happiness of metaphor, and strikingness of application are apparent on a larger scale, as in his Children's Sermons. The village congregation is, indeed, exceptionally favoured in its possession of so powerful a preacher."—*Church Review*.

"We find the idea so well carried out that we cannot but hope that the volume will be widely used. There is something so definite, striking, and even piquant in every sermon, that they cannot fail to be serviceable."—*Church Quarterly*.

"These sermons are excellent in matter and in style, simple and pure in diction, and perfectly intelligible, without being thin or shallow. They are excellent Sunday morning sermons for almost any kind of congregation."—*Church Bells*.

**MISSION SERMONS, FIRST SERIES, containing
twenty Plain Sermons. Price 3/-, by post 3/2. (This volume is
at present out of print.)**

**MISSION SERMONS, SECOND SERIES. Thirty
Plain Sermons. Besides many on General and Miscellaneous
subjects, the volume also includes Sermons for Advent, Christ-
mas, Lent, Easter, Trinity, Harvest Festival, Autumn, &c.
Third Edition. Cloth, price 4/6, by post 4/9.**

**SHORT SERMONS FOR CHILDREN, including
a few for Young Domestic Servants. A Series of Twenty-Three.
Price 3/6, by post 3/8. (The Second Edition of these most
successful Sermons.)**

"Deserve the greatest praise. Concise, earnest, and affectionate, are epithets which may truthfully be applied to every sermon."—*John Bull*.

"Very earnest and powerful, and full of evidence of the wide sympathies and cultivated taste of their author. In style they are almost faultless; simple words, short sentences, straightforward constructions—all that sermon style should be. In short, whilst they are most unpretending, they are sermons of a very high mark indeed, and we would commend them to the younger men among the clergy as models for their own pulpit addresses."—*Literary Churchman*.

"Short and telling sentences, full of illustration and anecdote, with the charm of poetry about them, they are altogether well suited to catch the attention of their hearers."—*Church Times*.

"Capital little Mission sermons, full of varied illustration from all sources. The clever selection of texts is one of the happiest features of this volume."—*Union Review*.

